Imprisoned Grief: A Theological, Spiritual and Practical Response

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by
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Abstract

This thesis identifies 'imprisoned grief' as a new phenomenon. The Living with Loss project was a theological, spiritual and practical response to it co-constructed by the research participants and myself as the practitioner-researcher. The project ran from 2008-2011 at both HMP Kirkham and HMP Whitemoor. My initial findings highlighted the fact that 'disenfranchised grief' (Doka 1989) and 'self-disenfranchised grief' (Doka 2002) were inadequate descriptions of what I uncovered in my research. Doka himself (2002, p18) called for further research to be carried out in particular circumstances including prison, encouraging my own confidence in the importance of such research.

'Disenfranchised grief' is a condition which people feel when unable to access support from family, friends, religious and professional organisations in living with issues of grief and loss. It is exhibited by prisoners where the acute loss of family, relationships, home, employment, finance, education and ability to parent come together. Issues of loss and bereavement accumulate when a parent or other family members becomes terminally ill or dies during their imprisonment. 'Self-disenfranchised grief' is a self- initiated form of disenfranchised grief where the self will not allow grieving to take place. I consider that neither description fully explains the condition I encountered, which I have called 'imprisoned grief.'

Imprisoned grief is distinctive because it manifests itself due to the loss of freedom brought about by imprisonment; during anticipatory grieving whilst in prison; following bereavement in prison and loss acts as a factor in criminal behaviour which include loss due to homicide. My research offers spiritual, theological and practically distinctive coping strategies and insights into how imprisoned grief can be 'unlocked' and prisoners can feel liberated from it. Enfranchisement was established between family members by sharing feelings and emotions in group work and through the composition of and facilitation of faith rituals. I argue that it was their beliefs and spirituality which sustained, combated and freed them from 'imprisoned grief'.

Summary of Portfolio

The constant element in this professional doctorate has been reflection on my practice as a prison chaplain, charting how I became a researching professional.

My literature review covered four areas: practical theology, loss and bereavement (in particular disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief), prison chaplaincy and psychoanalytic thought. I subsequently examined scholarship on assumptive loss, the role of faith and spirituality in prisoners' lives and ritual. This revealed that neither had the theory of disenfranchised grief been applied to the prison setting nor had the role of the prison chaplain in this area of ministry.

My publishable article arose from a prisoner's comment that he felt as if he had "come home" when he entered the Chapel at HMP Kirkham. The liturgy offered him comfort, meaning, and a sense of purpose which he had experienced in early life. I examined the meaning and importance of 'sacred space' at HMP Kirkham as a place for restoration, hope, human encounter, examination of the past and to look forward marking transitional life stages for both prisoners and staff. This article was peer reviewed and published (Lane, 2011 and Lane, 2012).

In my reflective practice piece I examined my ministerial supervision as a form of 'encouragement'. I argued that what happens in ministerial supervision encompasses the languages of practical theology, spirituality and psychoanalysis within the forensic context of prison chaplaincy. I used a case study to highlight how I used different languages in my interaction with one prisoner during supervision and then as a chaplain.

In my research proposal, I drew attention to how disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief were experienced both by prisoners and their families. I made the choice of action research as an approach for the Living with Loss project showing the influences of Hans-Georg Gadamer (2003) and a model of practical theological reflection developed by John Swinton and Harriet Mowat (2006) which gave rise to the aims and objectives of the thesis.

Chapter One

Introducing the Research

Setting the scene

> As the myriad circumstances of loss become more recognized there is a pressing need for research that really describes the particular and unique responses to different types of losses, compares reactions, outcomes, and problems associated with these losses; assesses possible interventions and describes the critical variables affecting each loss...most critically it will offer a foundation on which to acknowledge, assist and enfranchise the disenfranchised (Doka 2002, p.19).

Ken Doka's call for research of this sort accords very closely with the motivation for, and methodology of, my study of grief amongst prisoners. This introductory chapter lays out the origins of my research, my role as the researcher-practitioner, the reasons behind my choice of methodology and its purpose and argument. It gives a definition of disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief and an overview of the thesis outlining the highlights of each chapter.

The Living with Loss research project was given ethical permission to take place at both HMP Kirkham and HMP Whitemoor by the Prison Service and the University of Chester between 2008-2011. The research was conducted as an action research project involving fifty volunteer

prisoner participants and was facilitated by four employed chaplains and two chaplaincy volunteers. Other chaplains from the Muslim and Buddhist traditions facilitated faith rituals when required. The project consisted of one focus group, the facilitation of five Living with Loss courses, thirty five optional faith rituals, a monthly support group, opportunities to mark key life anniversaries and ten informal follow up interviews in which prisoners could voluntarily participate. The project took place within the chaplaincy centre of both prisons. The research was aimed at supporting prisoners both spiritually and practically in living with experiences of grief and loss. The project achieved this though peer support, group solidarity and professional support from chaplains. Until the project started, research participants found themselves both disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised as a way of coping with these grief experiences magnified by losing their freedom. This research sought to make a response to this theologically, spiritually and practically.

Research origins

I was a Prison Chaplain at Her Majesty's Young Offenders' Institution New Hall, Her Majesty's Prison and Young Offenders' Institution Doncaster and Her Majesty's Prison Wymott from 2001 to 2011, as an Anglican priest. I was involved in supporting those grieving in prison in a number of ways including verifying and informing a prisoner that a relative has a terminal illness or had died; accompanying a family when

breaking this news either in the prison chapel or visiting room; counselling those who had received this news; attending funerals with prisoners; leading worship and conducting group work with prisoners who had a history of serial bereavements whilst in prison; attending and conducting prisoners' funerals and memorial services; conducting memorial services on the anniversary of death of a loved one and saying prayers on the day of the funeral if a prisoner was unable to attend.

My interest in one of the concepts at the heart of this research – that of 'disenfranchised grief' - has its origins not just in my professional life but also my personal life. I found myself a "disenfranchised griever" when my grandmother died whilst I was away from home during my curacy in Huddersfield, aged twenty five. I could easily identify that being away from family and friends was not an ideal position in which to grieve. In my role as a prison chaplain I was conscious that there was often little consideration given to the feelings and emotions that prisoners experienced on receiving sad news. Little time was spent on thinking about how they might process this, given their disenfranchisement from family, friends and the professionals who might ordinarily offer support. There were also those anticipating a death within their family because of a terminal diagnosis. This weighed heavily on top of the experience of loss through imprisonment, hence their experiences of grief and loss accumulated.

Living with Loss Project

The project began with a one-off focus group of eight prisoners at Her Majesty's Prison (hereafter HMP) Kirkham in 2008. Each prisoner received a letter of information about the research and gave their written consent[1] to take part. The letter made clear that as a researcher I had a duty of care to them as participants. The written consent ensured anonymity for the participants and the ground rules which were established at the focus group offered them safety and confidentiality within the bounds of the legal requirements laid on me as an employee of HM Prison Service.

HMP Kirkham is a category D establishment providing for 630 adult males within the open prison estate. This focus group met once with eight newly bereaved prisoners who had received some initial pastoral support from the chaplaincy team. A number of different themes emerged from the focus group like loss of family members through criminal activity, loss of a place within the family, loss of livelihood, work and future employment prospects. Participants associated these with their loss of self-esteem, self-worth and trust of those around them which manifested themselves in feelings of worthlessness, shame, embarrassment, ostracism, depression and isolation.

[1] See Appendix Two.

Shortly after this, the prisoners attended a Living with Loss course at HMP Kirkham in the chaplaincy one afternoon per week for six weeks facilitated by myself and another chaplain who was an employed ordained female United Reformed Church Minister. Attending the course was a voluntary activity and therefore self-selecting. None of the eight volunteer prisoners regularly attended chaplaincy groups or worship. The only condition was that they would be able to attend all of the six sessions to make possible a contained group to gather.

The pre-course questionnaires[2] filled in by the volunteer participants identified bereavement as the most common form of loss that they wished to address. This was addressed by the course facilitator by outlining the five stages of mourning and grief first suggested by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (1969). Participants identified with the different stages of denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

Course materials and discussions examined the feelings and reactions to loss and the possibility of letting go of some of the experiences which had caused pain. Each session had an input from facilitators, film clips followed by a discussion of different expressions of grief and loss, a break and time to reflect upon one's own personal grief and losses. Participants could discuss this either with their peers or individual

[2] See Appendix One

facilitators. A course booklet[3] encouraged them to answer various questions before each session in order to sustain their reflections throughout the week and prepare for the next session. At the end of the course there was an opportunity to create an individual faith ritual with a chaplain of their choice which could address some of the losses that had been examined during it and to complete a post-course questionnaire. This took place variously in the chapel, multi-faith room or group room in the chaplaincy centre. This same six week socio/educational course with faith ritual was facilitated at HMP Whitemoor in 2009 by myself and another chaplain, a Roman Catholic lay woman. HMP Whitemoor is an adult male prison of 458 prisoners. It caters for those in the first stages of life sentences or longer term prison sentences. Many prisoners are either classed as Category A or B. One of the two Muslim prisoners opted not to create a faith ritual and the other was happy for this time to be spent with me discussing issues concerning his failed relationship since coming to prison. Participants completed both questionnaires (PreCQW and POCQW).[4]

At HMP Whitemoor the courses were facilitated by an employed female lay Roman Catholic chaplain, male Methodist chaplain and two male volunteer chaplains, an ordained male Baptist minister, a male lay house

[3] See Appendix Three for a copy of the nine week course upon which the six week course was based.

[4] Both questionnaires appear in Appendix One and hereafter will be known by these acronyms.

Church leader and myself. Those of no registered faith took the opportunity to spend time consolidating their learning and experience of the course with a facilitator instead of creating a faith ritual.

Both six week courses at HMP Kirkham and HMP Whitemoor were recorded and transcribed. The assurance of anonymity was repeated often. The transcripts were checked for accuracy with the participants. I kept the flip chart notes that were made during both courses and made notes following the ten faith rituals that I conducted.

A monthly peer support group was facilitated for two and a half hours in the chaplaincy centre for course graduates at HMP Whitemoor and I made notes at the time of the group meeting capturing group discussions. The support group acted collaboratively as prisoners supported one another through listening, discussing, watching film clips, by looking at suggested reading materials and through facilitated conversations and rituals on an individual basis with myself as facilitator. I supplied them with self-help books, DVDs and information from charities. Sometimes individual prisoners would ask specifically for spiritual guidance, often a memorial service or faith ritual to mark anniversaries of significant losses like coming to prison, the death of a relative, disappointments of being turned down for parole or to celebrate annual progress of being drug free.

Three further nine week Living with Loss courses, followed by optional faith rituals were then facilitated by an employed female lay Roman

Catholic Chaplain, male Methodist Chaplain and two male volunteer Chaplains, an ordained male Baptist minister and a male lay house Church leader and myself.

Research Purpose and Argument

In the past fifteen years there have been a number of studies which have examined experiences of bereavement, grief and loss in the prison population, amongst them Edwards 1999; Jolson and McEwan 2004; Hammersley and Ayling 2006; Harner, Hentz and Evangelista 2011 and Masterton 2014. The studies by Peter Hammersley and Dorothy Ayling (2006) and Janette Masterton (2014) took place in the United Kingdom, the others listed above in the United States. They draw upon the experiences of male and female prisoners grieving during incarceration and how best to support them. These range from developing a psychological inventory, to group work and individual psychotherapy. Both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection were used. None draws upon Doka's concept of disenfranchised grief. There are tangential references (Edwards, 1999, p. 66; Hammersley and Ayling, 2005, p.1 and Masterton, 2014, p. 61) to the work of prison chaplains but no attention is given to their specific role or function, theological grounding, or to the specific types of ministry available to prisoners and their families in the face of grief and loss.[5]

[5] This is discussed further in Chapter Two.

By contrast, my research seeks to explore how male prisoners in two different prisons in England, HMP Kirkham (2008) and HMP Whitemoor (2009-2011), were sustained in living with experiences of grief and loss from a theological, spiritual and practical point of view. The research allows me to argue that a theory of 'imprisoned grief' expands the academic models of disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief and loss and in particular demonstrates how practical theological reflection can further illuminate how enfranchisement, liberation and transformation can occur in such restricted circumstances.

The thesis therefore attends to the gaps in the above mentioned body of academic literature through two overarching aims and objectives. First, it aims to gain a greater understanding of the world of disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief amongst participants involved in the Living with Loss project. This is with a view to being able to comprehend the impact of these two phenomena, compounded by living within an institution pervaded by issues of loss, and to see if these definitions still gave a limited and incomplete picture of the prisoner's experience. Second, it seeks to reflect spiritually, theologically and practically on these experiences in order to articulate a distinctive set of practices which can offer sustaining spiritual and practical support towards enfranchisement, liberation and transformation. I use the resources of Practical Theology to achieve these aims.

Participant Action Research and Practical Theological Reflection

A model of participant action research (hereafter PAR)[6] acted as the framework for the research (Reason and Bradbury, 2006, p. 83). PAR developed within the action research tradition and places emphasis on the participation of those being researched throughout the whole process of the research project. PAR explicitly aims to change and improve situations that are being studied. The Living with Loss project was grounded in lived experience. It was developed in partnership with and addressed the significant problems of the participants working *with* them (rather than simply 'studying' them) to develop new ways of seeing their world in order to enfranchise, liberate and transform their experience. Participants became co-researchers with the researcher as together we worked through how they could best be supported in living with the losses they had faced and were about to face under the daily familiarity of the loss of freedom.

The spiritual and practical changes that occurred for the participants were as autonomous as possible. This had a knock on effect for some family members who found themselves enfranchised in this process. There was to some degree a cultural mind-set change amongst those who cared for them professionally within the prison, as they became more empathic and integrated their work with that of the Chaplaincy

[6] PAR is addressed in more detail in Chapter Three.

team. In attempting to complete the research's aims and objectives I wanted to assess the impact of the group and individual work to determine if it were possible for the research participants to reach a sense of ending autonomously, however temporary this might be. This happened either at the end of the course, support group or after a faith ritual.

I was curious to see what if any part faith, belief and spiritual practices could play in reinforcing this process. As a practitioner-researcher I was already fully immersed in their world as a chaplain and wanted to collaborate with the participants to achieve this. This involved prior observation of individuals, groups of prisoners and the relationships between them before constructing a general theory like 'imprisoned grief'. Gilbert refers to this as 'at the heart of sociological theory construction' (Gilbert 2008, p.27), where research seeks to give a particular example of social life like 'imprisoned grief', which is then used to theorize a more general pattern amongst the prison population, drawn from the empirical data. Although the research was about representing the narratives of those 'imprisoned' in their grief rather than my experiences as a researching-professional, I am able to make some observations and recommendations about the professional practice in my concluding chapter.

The qualitative research methods that I used to collect the data facilitated this process. Data was thematically analysed from the generic course questionnaires, two recorded six week courses, my research journal including notes made at the time of the three nine week courses, the rituals, the support group and during the different LWL courses and the informal interviews conducted a year after the support group had ended.

Although the group work curriculum was secular in format, prisoners spoke openly about their different cultural and religious backgrounds and expressed their beliefs about dying and death. There was no 'hot seat' and ground rules were thought out at the beginning of each new course. All of the participants registered their religion on entering the Reception area of the prison on their arrival into custody. For the majority they had been distanced from a faith community since childhood or had never belonged to one, registering as Nil. This had a bearing upon the research in as much as the facilitators themselves were aware of the different levels of understanding of various beliefs surrounding death and mourning within the project and were acclimatised to the prison culture.

I was clear throughout the group work and with the facilitators that there was no underlying motive in conducting this research in the sense that the urge to proselytise and evangelise was prohibited. This concurs with the Prison Service Standard on Religion (p. 3) on religious

observance, which states "prisoners are encouraged to observe their religion and their religious obligations are to be respected by staff" and in paragraph 34 "prisoners are not to be visited by a Chaplain against their will."

My research methodology is informed by the philosophy of Hans - Georg Gadamer (2003), who refers to a hermeneutical circle of interpretation, which binds together pre-conceived ideas about research subjects and fuses them with those of the research participants and the researcher practitioner to form future horizons. His philosophy became important in the Living with Loss project as it was one of the means by which I discovered 'imprisoned grief'. It enabled me to assimilate new experiences from the prisoner narratives, alongside my pre-understandings of their world from my chaplaincy experience and the extant literature. These deepened and clarified the meaning of their experiences in a process of critical dialogue. There is fuller discussion of this methodology in Chapter Three.

This research was a collaborative undertaking and had at its heart an action research model which sought theological, spiritual and practical emancipatory outcomes as its main objective. The research was influenced by the four stage model of Practical Theological Reflection (hereafter PTR) suggested by Swinton and Mowat (2006, p. 95) which examined my current praxis as prison chaplain, the culture and context

of imprisonment as a loss experience and the application of qualitative methods within the Living with Loss project.

I sought to discover a practical wisdom which gave explicit attention to facilitating a deeper awareness of God's activity in this imprisoned world. In order to do this I set about an open dialogue between the prisoner narrative of 'imprisoned grief', the extant literature surrounding this field from prison chaplaincy, psychoanalysis, criminology, practical theology and grief and loss with my experience as a prison chaplain to bring about a greater theological understanding of prisoners' experiences in order to improve the practices of those who care for them compassionately. This took place regardless of the faith position of the research participants but was a practical expression of concern for the welfare of those living with 'imprisoned grief'. This piece of practical theology is a study of faith in practice. It examines - through a collaborative dialogue and by emancipatory research methods - theologically grounded practical wisdom about the nature of 'imprisoned grief' and the sources of the prison chaplain's theological tradition.

Explanations of a number of definitions from personal observation during the early stages of the project are needed before I proceed to give an overview of the thesis.

Disenfranchised grief and Self-disenfranchised grief

According to Doka disenfranchised grief is

> ..a pernicious and enigmatic clinical process of hidden sorrow that had held in bondage grievers who had been deprived of the healing power of social support. Shrouded in faceless anonymity, disenfranchised grief has oppressed mourners whose numbers are legion and who therefore grieved in forced invisibility (Doka 2002, p. 352).

This general definition can be applied to those who for whatever reason cannot publicly mourn and grieve. Doka contextualises his theory beyond those losses which are not death-related to include "divorce, relocation, the relinquishment of a child for adoption or foster care, the loss of a job, or incarceration...that can be significant separations arousing grief" (Doka 2002, p.7). He suggests that these groups "fall outside the grieving rules "(Doka 2002, p.18) either because the relationship is not recognised, the loss is not acknowledged, the griever is excluded or because of the circumstances of the death.

For those incarcerated, disenfranchised grief is a social phenomenon. Their sorrows are hidden from those they love. The prison environment can trap them in grief as they feel that they cannot express their emotions through fear of being bullied, being seen to be weak or becoming a target for staff to monitor. This can mean that grief and loss

becomes locked inside and turn into self-disenfranchised grief. Jeffrey Kauffman says

> Self-disenfranchisement, then, is self-initiated disenfranchised grief, contrasted with disenfranchised grief that is initiated by societal disenfranchisement. One who self–disenfranchises grief may imagine that social sanctions exist where they do not exist in real social situations. Self-disenfranchisements are assumptions of disenfranchised grief based on past experiences of disenfranchisement, relived as present disenfranchisement or based on any psychological tendency to disallow and disavow one's own grief (Kauffman 2002, pp. 61-62).

This can lead to seeing the intra-psychic aspects of grief stemming from shame over one's emotions, the memories of past unsanctioned grief, shame prone personality traits or intra-psychic dimensions of the loss of community adding to the sense of disenfranchisement (Kauffman, 1989, pp. 25-9).

I encountered disenfranchised, self-disenfranchised and the intrapsychic aspects of grief in my everyday ministry. As definitions I believe that they fall short of providing a detailed explanation of how these manifest themselves within the prison environment and how and what if any part faith, belief and spiritual practices could do to combat and support these experiences. In this thesis I seek to enlarge these associated definitions.

Overview of the thesis

Chapter Two directly addresses the gap in the academic literature and ministerial practice through critique and discussion. Its purpose is to locate my research alongside the overlapping fields of literature and practice in the fields of prison chaplaincy, practical theology, criminology, penology, forensic psychotherapy, and ritual and grief studies. Theoretical perspectives from these subject areas illuminated my understanding and research but did not reflect completely the depth of my engagement with prisoners' imprisoned in their grief.

Chapter Three concentrates upon my research approach, methodology, design, qualitative research methods, my role as the researcher-practitioner and ethics. My research uses a Gadamerian (2003) staged approach to action research. This engages with PAR and describes and covers stage two of Swinton and Mowat's (2006, p.95) model of PTR to collect data using qualitative research methods. I also describe in detail the ethical framework for the research.

In Chapter Four I give a thematic analysis of my initial findings from the focus group at HMP Kirkham and the first two six session Living with Loss courses facilitated at HMP Kirkham and HMP Whitemoor. The data highlights four broad categories of grief and loss which contribute to the prisoner's unique imprisoned experience. In custody prisoners faced anticipatory grief, living in an environment of loss, bereavement during imprisonment and loss due to homicide.

In Chapter Five, I show that the prisoner experience, although exhibiting many of the signs of disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief identified by Doka (1989 and 2002) and Kauffman (2002), had its own set of imprisoning characteristics. This chapter examines these internally in the mind of the prisoner and externally within the prison environment. Alongside this are a distinctive set of emerging spiritual and religious practices and practical coping mechanisms which prisoners developed. These are illuminated further by looking at the aspects of them that resonate of Moltmann's experiences as a prisoner of war. These reflect the cumulative nature of prisoner experience and belong to stage three of Swinton and Mowat's (2006, p.95) model of PTR and reveal the heart of the theology of the thesis and how this challenged me as a practical theologian and practitioner.

This leads onto my concluding chapter, completing Swinton and Mowat's (2006, p.95) four stages of PTR, where I discuss the revised practice which has implications for the academy, the Prison Service and other professionals who work in the areas of grief and loss.

Chapter Two

The professional and academic context of the research

Introduction

In this chapter I examine the broader academic and professional context of my research. I endeavour to indicate how my research represents a distinctive contribution to the field of practical theology. I first identify the broader context to my work as a prison chaplain, in the legislative framework for religion and secondly the role of the prison chaplain as a pastor and in particular the metaphor of shepherding (having explored much of the literature on prison chaplaincy previously in Part One Literature Review). New material includes comparing and contrasting the role of the chaplain to that of a forensic psychotherapist, the importance of the literature on ritual, religion, faith and spirituality in the face of loss, critiquing comparative studies from within an imprisoning environment and lastly framing my research in the context of practical theology.

Prison Chaplaincy

This section sets out the background to the statutory requirements for prison chaplaincy. Article 18 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948 says

> Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief

> and freedom, either alone or in community with others in public or private, to manifest his religion in teaching, practice, worship or observance.

The *Standard minimum Rules for treatment of Prisoners* (adopted by the 1st UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders [1955]) expand this principle in section 41

> If the institution contains a sufficient number of prisoners of the same religion, a qualified representative of that religion should be appointed or approved. If the number of prisoners justifies it and conditions permit the arrangement should be on a full-time basis… [A] qualified representative appointed or approved under paragraph (1) shall be allowed to hold regular services and to pay pastoral visits in private to prisoners of his religion at proper times. In institutions where there are sufficient numbers of prisoners of the same religion that a Chaplain should be appointed for conducting worship and pastoral visiting.

HM Prison Service acknowledges this in its Standard 51 – Religion (Section 14 p. 2)

> A dedicated place of worship is available at all times for personal or private occasions and spiritual need: i.e. bereavement, significant anniversaries, counsel and confession.

and in Section 22

An effective system is in place for notifying the appropriate Chaplain immediately:

a. Of the death of a prisoner
b. Of a prisoner's family bereavement
c. Of seriously ill and/or suicidal prisoners
d. To offer help and counselling especially for matters relating to marriage or family

These Prison Service Standards are accompanied by Instructions. Instruction 51/2013 on Faith and Pastoral Care for Prisoners gives the chaplain a specific concern for the bereaved and for a prisoner's family. A Release on Temporary Licence (Prison Service Order 6300) can only be granted on compassionate grounds if one of the following has been established by the offender's supervisor.

Section 2.7.1

Visits to dying relatives, funerals or other tragic personal circumstances.

Section 2.7.2.

A close relative is defined as the prisoner's spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, fiancée or a person who has been in loco parentis to a prisoner, or to whom the prisoner has been in loco parentis. However, Governors will want to take into account other close caring relationships that may occur in extended families. It is for the prisoner to establish the closeness of the relationship.

This level of provision demonstrates a commitment on behalf of the Prison Service to allow prisoners to practise their faith and to provide them with pastoral support to do so in the case of a dying relative and bereavement. Any chaplain therefore has a level of professional accountability to the Prison Service as the employer and to the establishment in which they serve, as well as to their own individual faith group which itself provides them with permission to minister and determines the level of qualifications and experience they need.

Chaplain as Pastor

One particular metaphor has informed my exploration of prison chaplaincy since the beginning of my research programme - Rowan Williams' notion of "shepherding away from home" (Williams 2003, p. 54). This is a characteristically apt description of a ministry of drawing those who are lost together: the chaplain is one who cares for the disenfranchised often held a long way from their homes and families and at the same time the chaplain is an itinerant person who gathers people together in a safe place away from harm. Williams suggests that the chaplain's challenge is to see the person made in God's image beyond the criminal behaviour of the individual, an activity which will make the chaplain vulnerable to some degree if a genuine encounter is to take place. This is one of the guiding ideals that motivated me in setting up the Living with Loss project. Seeing the human being behind

the crime and drawing prisoners together into a community involves being a pastor modelled on the role of the shepherd as suggested by Williams.

Alistair Campbell's images of the pastor suggests a relationship grounded in mutuality, where there is a shared sense of common humanity and where courage, hope and transcendence can enable the other to reach a sense of wholeness.

> We touch on the ineffable experience where life and death meet, where the values upon which human existence depends are under question, where the edges of our individual lives seem to merge with those of others...Every person has many experiences of loss in life, though frequently the defences erected against its pain have concealed almost totally the original source of hurt (Campbell 1986, pp. 18, 42.)

In this research I was both the pastor and the practitioner-researcher. John Patton describes

> ..the capacity to facilitate change; the capacity to risk one's self; and the capacity to offer more than words. Because persons are in relation to one another, these are not capacities which are possessed apart from relationship but which are actualized in relation to another person (Patton 1990, p. 69).

Patton describes risking oneself as part of the search for transformational knowledge. This idea has helped me in my thinking about the three fold counter-cultural role of the prison chaplain: advocacy, presence and symbol. Advocacy on behalf of prisoners happens when one would like to attend the bedside of a dying relative or the funeral of a loved one.

Winnifred Sullivan credits prison chaplains with a very public ministry of presence that

> …operates at the intersection of the sacred and the secular, a broker responsible for ministering to the wandering souls of a globalized economy and a public harrowed by politics of fear while also effectively sacralising the institutions of the contemporary world (Sullivan 2014, p. 1).

I have found this working definition of the presence, position and role of the chaplain to be very helpful in addressing the religious, spiritual and practical aspects of supporting disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grievers in prison.

Todd and Tipton's contemporary study explores the importance of the role of safety that the chaplain symbolically holds in supporting prisoners facing a bereavement.

> The value of prison chaplaincy identified by the research lies particularly in the distinctiveness of the chaplain's role, especially

> in relation to the different role of the prison officer. Chaplains are identified as those with time for prisoners, who make availability a priority. Further, chaplains and chaplaincy spaces offer alternative locations for prisoners in which they can feel 'safe'. Both prisoners and prison officers identify an element of friendship and/or humanity (within boundaries) offered as part of the chaplain's presence in the prison. This contributes to a sense, particularly from prison officers and governors, that chaplains have something of a 'neutral', or 'independent', status within prison (Todd and Tipton 2011, pp. 5, 330).

and "We therefore suggest that the distinctiveness of the service chaplaincy provides lies in the fact that it is perceived as dissociated from the discourses of the institution it serves, and as such is considered, and thus valued,, as counter-cultural – countering many attendant pains of imprisonment" (Todd and Tipton 2011, p. 330).

The Chaplain and the Forensic Psychotherapist

There is an illuminating parallel between some aspects of the role of the chaplain and that of the forensic psychotherapist in prison. Robert Hinshelwood sees the forensic psychotherapist as the one who deviates from the dominant culture within the institution. Psychotherapists (and chaplains) represent a counter-culture clash between discipline and treatment. Hinshelwood says that if prison officers must always remain

"on top" (Hinshelwood 1993, p. 432) then there is always the likelihood that a small transgression will be treated out of all proportion to the actual danger to the prison or others. Violence occurs when this social defence system breaks down. If prison staff reject sensible compassion then discipline becomes debased and the psychotherapist becomes the receptacle for all that is disowned.

Hinshelwood (1993, p. 431) took a very low view of the possibility of effective work by a psychotherapist in an environment where the dominant culture allows no place for therapeutic relationships to be formed. He suggested that the prison's culture should be geared to channel its violence and conflict into therapeutic groups, as has been done with some success at HMP Grendon Underwood which is run along the lines of a therapeutic community within a prison environment. This culture attempts to manage the anxiety of the prisoner and the prison officer in a different way with optimal effect for both groups: relieving the prisoners' primitive terror and the prison officers' fear of uncontrolled violent criminals. Although I admire this attempted culture change, I suggest that because the psychotherapist's work is mainly confined to individual therapeutic sessions with a prisoner - who also is often being prescribed medication - his deepest thoughts and feelings can often remained masked.

The support that forensic psychologists and drug and alcohol therapists can provide is common in the prison estate as a whole. I adopted many of the principles of this therapeutic model, such as the importance of both group and individual work when designing the Living with Loss project. The spiritual, religious and theological work of the chaplain, especially in the area of symbol and ritual, can play a different and positive role in the lives of prisoners. Prisoners can mark significant anniversaries (such as the anniversary of death of a loved one) through the ministry of the chaplain in the context of worship: singly or in a group and even with family members present. All this shows the marked difference of the work of the chaplain from the work of the forensic psychotherapist. The chaplain is also available to prisoners on reception into and discharge from prison. He or she can play a key role in helping a prisoner adjust to prison life and by marking the transition point of leaving prison. The chaplain can also refer a prisoner to a Listener (a fellow prisoner) who has been through similar experiences to offer them support as they mark these significant life transitions. One of the most rewarding professional experiences I had during the Living with Loss Project was the opportunity to give a whole staff briefing on the work, which had notable positive benefits on their appreciation of, and support for, the aims of the project and the prisoners undertaking it. This would not be afforded to the forensic psychotherapist.

I now move onto some further distinctive aspects of the role of the chaplain in the face of grief and loss.

The importance of religion, faith and spirituality in the face of grief and loss

Matthews and Marwitt's research underlined the positive impact of a religious and spiritual life on the bereaved.

> For many persons, the encounter with bereavement and grief can lead them to a more deeply meaningful and satisfying religious or spiritual life. The main thing is the strength. The understanding that God is going to get you through anything that happens to you. And that gives you a different outlook on life...These descriptions illustrate the possibilities for bereavement to serve as the catalyst for a struggle that can lead some persons to experiences of positive change in their religious or spiritual lives that can be, for them, highly positive (Matthews and Marwitt 2006, pp. 108-109).

Vulnerability of any kind becomes magnified in prison as a place of isolation and deprivation. Reinforced deprivation through imprisonment with the resulting constrictions upon family life can create loneliness which affects people at root. Sedgwick contributes encouragingly to the report *Prisons: A study in vulnerability* suggesting "we lose God's image if we are locked into defensiveness, selfishness and struggle for survival. God communicates by fragile human acts and words" (Sedgwick 1999, p. 118). Prisoners rarely spoke of God in the Living with Loss course: a subject which caused them to seem

vulnerable in front of others, but they did do so during the faith rituals. That is not to say that the language used and interpreted by prisoners when describing their everyday experiences was unspiritual, nor one where no biblical analogies could be found. This was particularly true when participants discussed the film, The Mission, set in a religious community of Jesuits in South America. A feeling of safety and confidentiality was therefore important for the prisoner and explicit use of language about God was one which they embraced during the faith rituals.

Of course, physical isolation and incarceration led some prisoners to reject religious belief or practice. God could be blamed or questioned for the death of someone close and the fact that this had happened whilst away from home was frustrating and acute. Kauffman says

> A loss such as a death can cause individuals to challenge many of their global assumptions that relate to spirituality. These can entail such issues as the belief in or nature of a God or higher power that controls human destiny, a sense of fairness and justice in the operation of the world, or beliefs about what makes life or death meaningful (Kauffman 2002, p. 50).

This loss in assumptive world beliefs can cause a loss of confidence and a sense of identity at risk. Those who are grieving have a different place in the world and in their family structures and this affects their internal world-view as much as their external everyday lives. Freud (1917)

described the conscious work of mourning taking place in direct reaction to the loss of a loved one, or the loss of one's liberty or ideal. The more pathological form of this is melancholia - a cessation of interest in the outside world, the loss of the capacity to love, where the ego itself becomes empty and delusional expectations of punishment are often expressed.

A combination of mourning and melancholia was experienced in the Living with Loss project. The challenge for the chaplain and for this research was how to help people reconstruct their sense of self-worth in the face of such a loss. This was a complex task. Not only did prisoners feel that they had lost their name, position within society, their family, livelihood and freedom, they also had questions about their own self-belief and the nature of the human condition. Incarceration itself did not lead to these feelings inevitably. Victor Frankl points to the physical and mental deprivation of the Nazi concentration camp, which nevertheless was the spur to heightened spiritual awareness.

> In spite of all the enforced physical and mental primitiveness of the life in the concentration camp, it was possible for spiritual life to deepen. Sensitive people who were used to a rich intellectual life may have suffered much pain (they were often of a delicate constitution), but the damage to their inner selves was less. They were able to retreat from their terrible surroundings to a life of inner riches and spiritual freedom (Frankl 2004, p. 47).

Although it would be preposterous to draw a direct parallel between the conditions and reasons for the existence of the concentration camps experienced by Frankl and the British prison system, his ideas about how one's spirituality can assist in survival is a very useful observation and was drawn upon explicitly throughout the Living with Loss project. Frankl talks of the memory of the past countering the utter desolation of the camp.

> This intensification of inner life helped the prisoner find a refuge from the emptiness, desolation and spiritual poverty of his existence, by letting him escape into the past. When given free rein, his imagination played with past events, often not important ones, but minor happenings and trifling things. His nostalgic memory glorified them and they assumed a strange character. Their world and their existence seemed very distant and the spirit reached out for them longingly (Frankl 2004, p. 50).

He found that that spiritual inner life could be strengthened through the memory and imagination. Disenfranchisement could be lessened and the sense of imprisonment reduced even in that most extreme of environments. The way he noticed 'positives' from the past provided the Living with Loss project with some practical, insightful and spiritual coping strategies. These ideas were incorporated into the Living with Loss course materials when discussing mourning and melancholia in the course work and during the planning of faith rituals.

Grief, loss and ritual

Doka advanced the ground breaking concept of disenfranchised grief in 1987. Since initially applying this theory of grief to experiences by ex-spouses with that of homosexual and heterosexual lovers, the concept has gained a conceptual life of its own over the past twenty five years to encompass many different experiences. Doka (1989, p. 8) highlights the importance of ritual in his wide-ranging literature on grief and loss. These signs and symbols can be sacred or secular – as often a cross or Bible as a poem, letter or photograph - as a way of marking transitions, closure and anniversaries. Doka describes what happens when grievers are unwilling or unable to take part in a physical and active mourning ritual or to be part of the disposing of the body which makes real the implications of death and which enables one to work toward social reintegration and healthful ongoing living. His studies in in death and dying have made a significant contribution to the study of thanatology, particularly in America.

Rituals which are performed in the face of these events therefore need to convey significant meaning and assist with mourning, the loss of separation and absence through incarceration as well as the actual death of the deceased. Bereavement rituals under these circumstances need to provide social recognition, legitimation and support in times of loss and grief. If ritual conveys "transcendent significance" (Doka 2002, p. 135) then disenfranchised grievers in prison are sometimes either denied

these opportunities, or decide to disenfranchise themselves in order to feel protected from unwelcome thoughts and feelings.

Individual prisoners often requested such enfranchising rituals of continuity. Chaplains facilitated prayer and candle lighting on the day of a funeral, birthdays, anniversaries, year's mind and on Mothering Sunday. These rituals provided a sense of connectedness to the departed. Chaplains often conducted prayers with a prisoner and/or family members if they were unable to attend the funerals of relatives. These normally took place at the same time as the services in the community were actually taking place. The rituals enacted some of what their family members were able to do together. They played a palpable role in the moving on of grief.

Chaplains and other witnesses play two distinctive roles in this process. First they grant mourners 'permission' to disclose who and what they are - people who have experienced painful loss(es) - and secondly, they validate the mourner's self-disclosure. Arnold Van Gennep (1909, p. 147) suggests that rituals help to "mark" the place between the world of the dead and the world of the living. Victor Turner refers to rituals and rites of passage as the "betwixt and between" (Turner 1969, p. 95) when grief that becomes "stuck" needs a rite of re-integration. These ideas resonated not only with the prisoners' experiences of grief and loss but

enabled me to see them as representing being "betwixt and between" in their own right.

The Living with Loss project therefore not only provided a space to discuss how grief and loss affected prisoners emotionally, psychologically and physically but also an opportunity to demonstrate this religiously and spiritually both on an individual level and in corporate acts of worship. The Christian emphasis on hope, transformation, resurrection and eternity offered significant positive benefits for well-being. My research context allowed faith, spirituality and belief to play a positive role in the lives of the research participants outside the more formal and traditional forms of worship of the wider faith communities. In short, they were tailor-made for those in an actively disenfranchising context. By meeting individually with a chaplain, prisoners could explore what had been positive and negative about their relationships with the deceased without fear and use the time as an act of penitence seeking forgiveness for past actions as a step towards healing.

Comparative studies

Comparative study of the literature of penologists and criminologists shows that though generally acknowledging that the spiritual and practical needs of prisoners need to be addressed, it is rarely done so directly in their research. William Edwards (1999) describes disenfranchisement within a medium secure prison in America, where

attendance at the funeral of a relative was prohibited and regular chapel attendance or contact with a chaplain was not a way in which prisoners easily processed their grief. His quantitative study also addressed racial and cultural differences in the ways in which prisoners grieved under disenfranchising environment. Prisoners from differing racial backgrounds exhibited different patterns of grief, although Edwards could not resolve whether these were primarily cultural or demographic (Edwards 1999, pp. 73-74).

Edwards uses a brief symptom inventory to determine the relationship between complicated grief and disenfranchised grief. He describes complicated grief as that which arises when there is a morbid or pathological pattern of functioning related to grief and a person is unable to resolve in their own mind their feelings and reactions during a bereavement. This can become chronic, delayed or inhibited. A high level of disenfranchised grief was associated with levels of complicated grief and psychological distress amongst prisoners. He found that prisoners were excluded from many anticipatory grief rituals and practices and this was linked to poor outcomes in the grieving process. He pointed to weak internal sources of support and the fact that prisoners were held a long way from home as reasons. There were also cases of intrapsychic disenfranchised grief, when prisoners blamed themselves and cited their imprisonment as a reason and a cause for death of immediate family members. Edwards' research interests in this area clearly overlap with my own

> Further study in this area should also include designs that examine the feelings and perceptions of prison staff who are responsible for performing death notifications and arranging funeral visitations, or who spiritually or psychologically counsel mourning inmates. Their insights and perceptions may enhance the overall understanding of this complex grief environment (Edwards 1999, p. 76).

Two further comparable studies which describe grief counselling groups in prison specialising in 'disenfranchised grief' were of help. Margaret Jolson and Margaret McEwan (2004) describe a group set up by chaplains and run by volunteers which was attended by mainly white male prisoners in a closed prison in America. The prisoner group aimed to look at William Worden's (1991) tasks of mourning in the face of bereavement. Worden identifies four tasks: (i) to accept the reality of the loss, (ii) working through the pain of grief and loss, (iii) adjusting to the environment in which the deceased is missing and (iv) to relocate the deceased and move on with life. Music, ritual, photographs, poems and cards were used within the groups as triggers to enable enfranchisement. A booklet was provided and homework exercises and reflection throughout the week was completed. The group was closely monitored for safety and security purposes. Jolson and McEwan received anonymous feedback which suggested that the group process of their research project was too similar to other programmes prisoners had attended and that there was no follow up. These were particularly

useful insights for me when I was setting the Living with Loss group which was explicitly different from other group work and included follow up as an important element.

Peter Hammersley and Dorothy Ayling (2006) write about their experiences as chaplains at HMP Hewell Grange in Worcestershire of setting up a loss intervention project in conjunction with the prison's health care department with the aim of resolving loss and improving personal and social well-being. The programme consisted of three phases: a mid-structure interview to assess the extent of loss, an eight session group intervention and a post-intervention interview. They also offered one-to-one therapy alongside the course. They were absolutely clear that the small group process was crucial in providing a holding environment. Although obviously comparable to mine, their publication does not explain their methodology and does not include any quotations from participants themselves.

As in Jolson and McEwan's work, prisoners taking part in the Hewell Grange project found it difficult to leave behind preconceived negative ideas about the cognitive behavioural group work they had done to reduce their risk of re-offending. This directly affected their engagement with a group process. Their anger management courses had only focussed on prisoners expressing anger appropriately in the here and now and had not considered anger as a response to losses in the past and the difficult feelings allied to them, which sometimes had led to the

offending. Some prisoners found the atmosphere of the prison too constricting to be able to reflect upon issues of loss at all (Hammersley and Ayling 2006, p.23, 25).

Hammersley and Ayling (2006) recognised that they needed to include men from a variety of cultural backgrounds - as had been the case with Edwards' (1999) study - for its full impact to be properly evaluated. They altered their assessment tool to take account of the low level of literacy among prisoners.

Raelene Leach (2006) examined what happens when prisoners were released with unresolved traumatic grief and, despite a lack of verifiable academic evidence, she noticed how markedly prone they were to recidivism. Her hypothesis is that traumatic grief suffered by prisoners is linked to early attachment figures in prisoners' lives and that its suppression leads to maladaptive behaviour. Leach commented that traumatic grief needs to be identified and addressed early in a prisoner's incarceration so that it does not result in longer term emotional and physical symptoms (Leach 2006, p. 17). It appears from research undertaken by Gorski that if this does not happen then "unresolved trauma and loss issues prior to incarceration combined with institutional abuses could have the prisoner being released with additional psychiatric disorders" (Gorski as cited by Leach 2006, p.17).

Masterton examined how disenfranchised grief exhibits itself in her bereavement counselling within the Scottish Prison Service. She provided a prisoner case study which shows how the prison experience exacerbated experiences of grief and loss. This qualitative research called for development of a support structure for prisoners who find themselves in this situation. As her counselling work as an outside volunteer came to an end with each individual, prisoners felt that they could safely refer themselves "to the chaplaincy team for in house support" (Masterton 2014, p. 60). As she shared her findings with staff in the prison, they became more adept at spotting signs of the harm that unacknowledged grief can have. This led to healthcare staff interviewing prisoners in the Reception area of the prison to enquire if they had suffered any recent losses and to further bereavement counselling services to be made available within the Scottish Prison Service.

Although the work of chaplains and volunteers is included in such prison studies of grief and loss, they discuss neither how faith and spirituality can play a role in supporting and sustaining individuals in these experiences, nor do they describe any rituals that were carried as part of this process. They do not address what practical actions a chaplain can take in assisting prisoners with disenfranchised grief by also working with their families. There is still considerable room for my research in both the academic and professional fields.

The theoretical perspectives discussed touch on aspects of disenfranchised, self-disenfranchised and intrapsychic elements of grief within the prison environment, revealing it to be a stumbling block which could 'imprison' and 'trap' prisoners in their own narrative. This experience undoubtedly magnifies their feelings of grief and loss. The second half of this chapter addresses the literature on the area of how the physical prison environment heightened this experience.

Research environment

The physical constraints of the prison environment add to the lack of recognition of prisoners' grief. Holly Harner, Patricia Hentz and Maria Evangelista (2010) record that the female prisoners they interviewed spoke about putting their grieving process on hold, as if it was "frozen" in time. Their grieving was suspended whilst in prison and this caused anxiety while lack of privacy encouraged prisoners to bury their feelings and emotions. It was thought risky to reveal them since there was nowhere where they could go for comfort or human touch because their families were at a distance. Harner et al. focused upon how self-disenfranchised grief manifests itself in their one-to-one interviews. They said that grief counselling coupled with group therapy and a support group would lessen the sense of self-disenfranchisement and recommended the use of "other therapeutic modalities, such as art therapy or participating in groups that address psychosocial and

spiritual well-being" (Harner, Hentz, Evangelista 2010, p. 462). They suggested that the impact of supportive interventions be measured against these initial interview findings. Their conclusions obviously overlap with my research interests.

A study by the criminologists Alison Liebling, Helen Arnold and Christina Straub reported on HMP Whitemoor and reviewed a study they carried out there ten years previously. This research was being carried out at the same time as mine.

> Being open and connecting with people meant providing personal truths. Real information acted as the groundwork for establishing a relationship...whilst this form of exchange was a precondition to forming a social community in the outside world, in a high security prison, the sharing of personal information was transformed into a potentially destructive and risky action, with unforeseeable consequences for both parties (Liebling, Arnold, Straub 2011, p. 24).

The nature of a High Security prison like HMP Whitemoor meant that that the stakes were high for prisoners who shared personal information either with other prisoners or with staff. Fear of reprisal or of disciplinary consequences which might affect their treatment or potential length of sentence was strong. Inevitably such an atmosphere of fear and mistrust resulted in prisoners' feelings and emotions remaining hidden. Specifically with regard to the death of a relative,

prisoners felt disempowered by, and impotent at the hands of, the decisions of those whom they feared. Denial of the opportunity of helping in any way with arrangements or caring for loved ones before or after death provoked feelings in some of anger and frustration of being "sub-human" and punished at a new level beyond that for their crime. Liebling et al. drew attention to the work of the chaplain, and in particular the running of the Living with Loss course. They commented on my role at HMP Whitemoor: "the language spoken about prisoners, or 'our theology of the person', was refreshingly free of institutionalised risk-thinking" (Liebling et al. 2011, p. 37).

Their study describes particularly well how chaplains can become caught between the containing role of the institution where managing risk is paramount and living out a practical theology which attempts an understanding of a human being that delves beneath the crime to a perpetrator who is often hurt, vulnerable and broken, despite an exterior picture of toughness.

Gresham Sykes summarises loss and grief as one of the emotional pains of imprisonment

> In examining the pains of imprisonment as they exist today, it is imperative that we go beyond the fact that severe bodily suffering has long since disappeared as a significant aspect of the custodian's regime, leaving behind a residue of apparently less

> acute hurts such as the loss of liberty, the deprivation of goods and services, the frustration of sexual desire and so on (Sykes 1958, p. 64).

Liebling et al. say

> Whitemoor prison in 2010 reflected, in a concentrated way, many of the characteristics of a transformed 'late modern' society: high levels of fear, preoccupation with risk and security, increased reliance on complex technology (including media), low levels of interpersonal trust, widespread migration, multiculturalism and the contested values and religious expressions this brings, economic insecurity alongside widely advertised consumerism, otherwise fragmented identities, individualisation, feelings of meaninglessness, new forms of crime (and punishment), economic reasoning about its causes and control, and a temptation among the disaffected and excluded to cause 'symbolic affront' (Liebling et al. 2011, p. 10).

Liebling et al. agree with Sykes (1958, pp. 63-78) by suggesting that it is a combination of the prison environment which unifies prisoners' collective identity and the background, heritage and culture of an individual prisoner which contributes to the pain of imprisonment. The "loss of liberty, security and autonomy...The inability to define one's masculinity through the absence of heterosexual relationships and the lack of goods and services unifies prisoners' experiences and shapes

their collective identity. The combination of this with what prisoners bring to prison also shapes their identity" (Liebling et al.2011, p. 46). Both these models of the prison identity contribute to the way in which prisoners are disenfranchised by circumstance and how they self-disenfranchise through choice which makes their study directly relevant to the Living with Loss project.

Jessica Saunders' (2001) psychoanalytic study of imprisonment is very helpful in illuminating how the beginning and end of sentences can be viewed in terms of attachment and loss and therefore directly relevant to both research groups at HMP Whitemoor and HMP Kirkham. She says

> In terms of the start and end of a sentence, the remand and open prisons are potent settings in terms of mirroring experiences of attachment and separation for the prisoner; the arrival into prison is usually abrupt and sudden and the departure is frequently one that is not thought about and consciously worked with because of the anxieties that are evoked in relinquishing the grip that the prison has provided. Sudden and abrupt losses and traumatic and disturbed attachments have frequently coloured prisoners' lives, and therefore one can expect their attachment to and the separation from the prison to be fraught times...For prisoners, concrete objects have often stood in for a symbolic representation of a good enough internalised parental object, so that concrete holding must needs be sought out (Saunders 2001, p. 18).

Saunders, like Leach (2006), sees the patterns of imprisonment mirroring the early lives of prisoners. The prison in its physical form offers a complex symbolic attachment figure standing in for a parent who is capable of containing their behaviour. This has negative and positive connotations. As to individuals, the desired attachment figure is thought to be reliable, trustworthy, and powerless. Prisoners therefore often choose nurses, teachers and chaplains for this attachment role, not the psychologists, probation officers or prison officers whom they perceive to have power over their day to day lives. These insights from a specialist field support my argument that there is a double sense of loss experienced by the constraining environment and self-disenfranchised grief.

More general academic writing on grief like that of Worden (1991) and Kubler Ross (1969) suggests that constructive grieving is about learning to carry the pain of missing those who are mourned, rather than being totally preoccupied by it. Kauffman describes grief as an experience of the loss of an assumptive world, which in the case of prisoners is not only about the loss of the deceased, but also loss of the free world (Kauffman 2002 p. 50). The loss is about rooted identity and beliefs about the deceased and their mortal nature. Williams says that the nature of prison ministry envisages the possibility of forgiveness which involves the giving up of "power" by the prisoner by being truly

remorseful - another loss to one's identity (Williams 2003, p. 56). The Living with Loss project directly addressed these matters in session seven of the course.

Liebling et al. noticed that

> Prisoners described how being thrown back on themselves had given them time and forced them to contemplate the meaning of their lives, the reasons for finding themselves in their current situation, and more existential topics like the finality and meaning of life (Liebling et al. 2011, p. 27).

This experience parallels that of Moltmann (2007, p.26), who suggests '…in the prisoner of war camp there was nothing to do. On was exposed without any defence to what one had experienced and suffered, and had to 'come to terms with it', if that is, of course, the proper phrase to describe this mental and spiritual torment'.

Prisoners who continue to defend themselves through self-disenfranchised grief (Kauffman, 2002, pp. 61-62) will inevitably try to discount or dismiss the significance of their losses. However, their behaviour often suggests otherwise. Throughout the Living with Loss project it was evident that by understanding the extent and depth of their suffering, their experience of previous discouragements to express their hurt or oppressive interference in efforts to come to terms with brokenness and anguish, isolation and inappropriate social sanction, prisoners could be released from carrying feelings of worthlessness,

sadness, hurt, anger, anxiety in a number of ways - through peer support, ritual, or psychotherapy to name three. Respect from others in the group setting provided in the chaplaincy environment promoted mourners' self-respect and self-esteem. Liebling et al. spoke further about the Living with Loss project at HMP Whitemoor in this way.

> The concepts of trust, peace and relationship were in use. A very well liked 'Living with Loss course' had been devised (and accredited) with a support group to follow, and several faith and secular justice awareness courses were on offer (Liebling et al. 2012, p. 37).

Doka says

> The role of support groups for those with disenfranchised grief provides the opportunity for the griever to make public what he or she feels must remain private elsewhere. An antidote to disenfranchisement, they can be a safe haven, a place to obtain recognition, understanding and support (Doka 2002, p. 127).

And further

> [S]pecialised groups for the incarcerated...group identifying their own needs, where isolation, loneliness, shame, and guilt may be identified. The group setting allows them to hear and identify with other's stories. The losses deemed less significant or appropriate in general society can be appreciated in the group (Doka 2002, p. 132).

The Living with Loss project swiftly identified that the needs of those about to leave prison were different from those who had just arrived, not just in the obvious ways of time to be spent there but in terms of attachment to prison, the accumulation of loss experiences and the shame and guilt that group members were carrying. Hearing one another's narrative became an important avenue of affirmation and healing. Doka's suggestion in the quote above that losses are in some way magnified through incarceration resonates with my experience of these groups.

Thomas Attig comments on Doka's thoughts and applies his theory to institutions

> [D]isenfranchisement misses the mark by suggesting that, like the practice of denying someone the right to vote (the franchise), it is a matter of denying them the entitlement to do something that is within the power of institutions to grant. Rather, the 'right to grieve' is a matter of human dignity. It is rounded in recognition of the nature of human attachments and the inherent needs and desires of all who live in the human condition to grieve in their own ways when loved ones die (Attig 2004, p. 204).

The Living with Loss project provided the space, protection and social support in order to discern hopeful paths beyond suffering and distress in a search for lasting love.

The above critique of how the different theoretical positions about how the prison environment contributes to disenfranchisement and self-disenfranchisement are now synthesised with the different theoretical positions held within practical theology as I move towards defining my conceptual framework.

Practical Theology

Don Browning (1991) suggests that practical theology is inextricably linked with human flourishing and that this reflects its connection with its origins within the Christian and Jewish tradition. He calls this the practical theology of care. He says there should be interplay between practical theology and other secular perspectives in regard to human experience where it "critically correlates both questions and answers found in the Christian faith with questions and implied answers in various secular perspectives (the human sciences, the arts) on common human experience" (Browning 1991, p. 93). This is why practical theology is a field of study that is relevant to my research, since I draw upon theoretical perspectives which offer both a theological and secular insights into how prisoners grieve and face loss under incarcerating circumstances in conversation with what I unearthed in the fieldwork.

Stephen Pattison and James Woodward define practical theology from a practitioner perspective as a "transformative activity" (Pattison and Woodward 2000, p. 10). The Living with Loss project is an attempt to understand and to respond to the contemporary human issue of

disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief within the prison population from a theological perspective which affects prisoners' views of themselves and their world and in so doing represents transformation.

In giving a theological response to these matters Elaine Graham says that pastoral theology "...enables the community of faith to give critical and public account of its purposeful presence in the world, and the values that give shape to its actions" (Graham 2002, p. 2008). These definitions and movements in thinking are relevant to my research since I am an ordained Anglican priest within the liberal catholic tradition giving an account of her work as researcher-practitioner in the prison world and seeking to define the gospel centred values which gives it form and value.

By using a practical theological framework I am able to say something about life in prison and the way in which prisoners engage with the transcendent and any benefits that they gain from it. I do so by using collaborative action research methods and presenting the prisoner narratives. My understanding of the role of practical theology is therefore to offer a transformative, liberating and enfranchising lens to prisoners' lives as an active and collaborative process.

This perspective grounds me in the practical collaborative work of finding spiritual coping mechanisms and practical solutions which

acknowledge the transcendent at work in the world and I investigate what difference if any this had for the research participants. This enables me to be a reflexive practitioner and at the same time employ a participative active research methodology within the project. Its collaborative nature makes an active difference to the outcomes for participants. Graham, Walton and Ward say "practice is both the origin and the end of theological reflection, and the 'talk about God' cannot take place independent of a commitment to a struggle for human emancipation" (Graham, Walton, Ward 2005, p. 170). My participatory action research model sought theological, spiritual and practical emancipatory outcomes which engage with the divine by following Swinton and Mowat's (2006) four stage model of PTR using qualitative research methods to build a picture of 'imprisoned grief.'

In Chapter Three I reveal my research approach including its benefits and limitations, identify my qualitative research methods, the research design and the ethical framework behind it.

Chapter Three

Doing action research in prison

Introduction

Chapter One established the aims and objectives of my thesis and identified the Living with Loss project as the research fieldwork. Chapter Two outlined the salient theoretical perspectives already existing within the academy. In Chapter Three I justify my choice of methodology and my research approach including an assessment of its benefits and limitations. I outline the qualitative research methods used to collect the data including the influence of the four stage model of practical theological reflection (Swinton and Mowat, 2006), my research design and the ethical framework which supported the research. I conclude with suggesting that this process helped me to define the conceptual framework for the research as 'imprisoned grief.'

My choice of methodology is informed by an action research approach which is collaborative, participatory and co-operative. Action research can be described as a partnership, a process, a conversation and a way of knowing which seeks to solve participants' problems so they can gain greater control over their situation (Cameron et al. 2010, p. 36). This model of doing research lies at the heart of how I saw the researcher-practitioner in the Living with Loss project working - one motivated by theology, spirituality and practice in partnership with participants

addressing the problem of disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief exacerbated by incarceration. An action research approach gives as much autonomy as possible to the participants in enabling these problems to be resolved.

Using the action research approach, I chose a participatory way of working to address my research questions. Is disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief an adequate description of the prisoner experience of loss? Can a faith ritual benefit prisoners in living with loss in prison? What methods and sources can be used in the process of theological reflection for a prison chaplain who is also a researcher-practitioner? How can this research be used as a model of good practice by other practitioners in settings where people are away from home?

Qualitative Research methods

Qualitative research methods helped me to build up a "thick description" (Swinton and Mowat 2006, p. 122) of the differences between disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief. The prisoner data not only resonated with findings from comparable studies but made the distinctive contribution which Doka (Doka 2002, p.19) - whom I quoted at the beginning of the thesis - called for when arguing the pressing need for further research to be done into specific and different circumstances and types of loss and for assessments to be carried out into interventions which have the potential to enfranchise. I used a multi-method programme of qualitative research to investigate and

evaluate how chaplains in the two different prisons where I worked did this.

This was strengthened by applying the concepts of "reliability" and "validity" (Gilbert, 2008, pp. 32-33) as a way of broadening the debate. The trustworthiness and reliability of the data gives it its validity as a piece of research. It provides two samples from different settings. I argue that my emerging conceptual theory of 'imprisoned grief' can be applied to other settings. In this thesis I highlight what happens to prisoners at both the beginning and end of their sentences. I built a provisional prototype covering the main areas of loss faced by prisoners which was informed by a focus group, which then resulted in the running of Living with Loss courses in both prisons. The addition of the support group and emphasis on faith rituals enhanced participants' ownership of their spiritual lives in this process and this is something that is transferable to other settings.

The findings of the research can be seen as good practice for informing the work of prison chaplaincy departments throughout the country. As an individual researcher-practitioner I was completely in control of the research process and not reliant on a team of researchers.

Participatory Action Research

PAR developed from within the action research tradition. Nigel Gilbert says "PAR places greater emphasis on the participation of those being

researched...and aims to change and improve the social situation being studied" (Gilbert 2008, p. 105). There are three main facets to this approach: people, power and praxis. PAR was intended to be emancipatory, collaborative and empowering for the researcher and participants working together to change disenfranchising and self-disenfranchising situations to ones of enfranchisement, liberation and transformation.

Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury say "in participatory research people share problems in common and decide what problems to tackle and directly get involved in research and social change activities" (Reason and Bradbury 2006, p. 83). In my research, partnerships were formed between the researcher, facilitators and participants in the Living with Loss project. The purpose of these conversational partnerships was to maximise the power of the participants' voices in the struggle for autonomy over their lives in the face of grief and loss thus addressing the first two facets of Gilbert's approach: people and power.

This research can also be viewed in the prison context as emancipatory and counter-cultural. It was conducted in a spirit of partnership and was mutually beneficial for researcher and participants. I was able to conduct research with their consent and they gained support from chaplains and peers in living with grief and loss. The first eight members on the Living with Loss course at HMP Whitemoor provided feedback which benefited the next cohort of participants. This led to changes in the

course format and curriculum. A support group was formed at the participants' suggestion as a way of continuing to sustain them living in an environment in which loss was pervasive. The refreshed practice (itself a result of collaboration between researcher, course facilitators and the research participants) produced something better because it became a collaborative exercise.

There were inevitably overwhelming difficulties associated with implementing PAR within the prison context. By their very nature prisons limit the amount of opportunity to use their own initiative to change their own circumstances. Many examples can be given: the limited number of phone calls that prisoners can make restrict enfranchisement; the restrictions surrounding the granting of compassionate ROTL for a funeral or to visit the graveside of a family member; limitations on the number of individual 'private' family visits and the rules about who is deemed a family member with regard to funeral attendance and the consequences for future supportive family dynamics. The group most affected by these restrictions are younger offenders whose grandparents had had a significant part in the raising them and play a particular role in ensuring stable family relationships continue.

These restrictions were associated with choices being made about prisoners by security staff about whether they could attend the church funeral service, the committal at the Crematorium or the graveside

burial, the wake and/or the internment of ashes. As rituals these events all have benefits in enfranchising, transforming and sustaining meaningful relationships.

Constraining decisions made about or on behalf of prisoners were therefore at odds with the compassionate autonomy advocated in participant action research. Other challenges placed on PAR by the prison environment included the limited amount of time that I could spend as a researcher with the prisoners in group work without interruption from uniformed staff. Time was also limited due to prisoners being held on different wings of the prison from each other. Furthermore, to capture the essence of what was being said relied heavily on the researcher to collect information from the prisoners. It reflected the low literacy levels amongst the population and the fact that under other circumstances as participants they would have had greater access to the data collected.

However, a further reason for choosing a PAR approach was its direct links to practical theology and Practical Theological Reflection (hereafter PTR), thus addressing elements of praxis – the third facet of Gilbert's approach. PAR enabled me to collect the data necessary to examine the current state of praxis and the context and culture of the research field mentioned in stage one and two of Swinton and Mowat's (2006) four stage model. The final reason for choosing it as the methodological

approach for the project was that it had already been successfully used in comparable research into professional practice in helping professions like health, social care and psychology (Gilbert, 2008, pp. 109-115). This enabled me to fulfil the first objective of the research in expanding upon the models of disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief and to work towards building a picture of 'imprisoned grief' and answer my research questions.

PAR working alongside PTR also enabled me to fulfil the research's second objective which was to contribute further knowledge within my own field of professional practice. Prisoners were willing to share with chaplains and other peers the problems that they faced within their imprisoned lives in the Living with Loss courses and support groups. I argue that it made an active difference to how they lived within a disenfranchising environment and the spiritual and practical responses made to their particular situations. Mark Fox, Peter Martin and Gill Green describe it thus

> Empowerment can be for the participants in the research, the organisation in which they work or for the researcher…The practitioner researcher is seen as bringing expertise in research methodology and theoretical perspectives. This expertise is then shared with the participants who are recognised as experts in their own situation. The research process is seen as a collaborative partnership. Within the partnership there is recognition of the

differences in values and power of the people involved (Fox, Martin, Gill 2007, pp. 48 and 51).

My methodology was both participative and collaborative.

Collaborative Enquiry

Fox, Martin, Green adopt the idea of collaborative PAR as a way in which participants have a primary responsibility for improvements and for evaluating how these strategies are worked out in practice (Fox, Martin, Gill 2007, p.52). This again underlines the promotion of individual responsibility and autonomy, something counter-cultural to the nature of the prison environment, yet crucially important in the service of enfranchising, liberating and transforming 'imprisoned grief.' Prisoners wanted to be involved in making decisions about the way in which the Living with Loss course materials were reviewed. During support group meetings they decided that the course should be extended from six to nine weeks in length and also asked for resources and opportunities which would aid enfranchisement like self-help materials. One member became an advocate and he told other prisoners about the course at the weekly course induction programme for new prisoners. Another prisoner asked for weekly psychotherapy to be available, and others wanted faith rituals to be available at other times of the year. These suggestions were all implemented. Prisoners took an active, autonomous and participative role.

My research employed elements from the world of co-operative enquiry, which in John Heron's (1996) definition enables research into the human condition to be done in groups. This involved peer working and group solidarity as a means to change. Heron points to some of the difficulties which I encountered as a practitioner-researcher especially within the prison setting where there was a suspicion about what I was doing. I was initially managing projections of which I was unaware which came mainly from prison officers who wanted access to prisoners during group work.

> The very process of inquiring into human nature, human interactions and the human condition, may stir up fear and defensiveness in the researchers. The fear is of that which is both unknown and very close to the psychological home. The defensiveness is about those aspects of themselves which they have had to repress and deny surviving and be accepted when growing up in an emotionally alienated society (Heron 1996, p. 149).

Co-operative enquiry as a research methodology assisted me to generate incremental data and knowledge. This made a direct link to Stage Two of Swinton and Mowat's model of doing PTR. At the heart of this approach is an active ownership of the field work by both researcher and participants.

Limitations of the Methodology

PAR has often been criticised for having aims and objectives which are too loosely defined and for an 'unscientific' approach (McTaggart, 2006). It certainly does not have a rigorous scientific frame of reference involving controlled experiments which can give empirical uniformity of results providing a system of theory. It could of course be argued that the Living with Loss project was only a small research group, carried out only in two contexts, and therefore did not provide sufficient empirical data. This is countered by the fact that participants self-selected and that there are generalisations that can be made from the results of the research. The theological, spiritual and practical model of addressing imprisoned grief can indeed be adapted to other contexts as it provides a prototype for other practitioners in a rigorous dialogue with a set of academically respected contemporary theoretical perspectives. The outcomes from the project are found in the data in the evaluative questionnaires compiled by the facilitators at the beginning and end of the Living with Loss courses. These provide an understanding of the emotional progress, insight, understanding and learning that each individual prisoner made while attending the course.

I deliberately chose a qualitative approach to my research to measure the impact on prisoners of how their faith and beliefs about death and bereavement could assist them in coping to continue to live away from their ordinary everyday lives. Much as with PAR, qualitative research

seeks meaning through a process of interpretation, rather than a set of statistics and experiments from which one can reach deductive conclusions through randomised controlled trials or longitudinal studies. My qualitative research sought rather to take a snap shot of prison life for a small group of prisoners at the beginning and the end of sentence in response to the experience of self-disenfranchised and disenfranchised grief. In order to gain an in-depth qualitative depiction of their experience, I used a heuristic approach recording conversations, events, feelings, thoughts, values and beliefs. Clark Moustakas describes the researcher's task as "to derive the raw material of knowledge and experience from the empirical world...and seek to illuminate it from direct first person accounts of individuals who have directly encountered the phenomenon in experience" (Moustakas 1990 p.38). In so doing, I seek to synthesise these accounts with a theological interpretation which itself provides a richer picture than on first sight. Patton says

> The emphasis on hermeneutics has made us aware that there is a sophisticated process that goes on when we take our pastoral experience with theological seriousness...The first problem might be called the loss of object or the loss of human confidence that the objective world, as we experience it, is accessible to us at all...although we cannot experience God objectively, we can affirm that God is involved in the general consciousness or experience of

> human beings...the second problem is...modern theology becomes not only a theology limited by human experience and consciousness but also a theology confined by its language (Patton 1990, p. 98).

These problems show both the limits of human understanding and of theological language. In this research there is an affirmation that God is involved in each participant's experiences and specifically in the faith rituals and spiritual coping strategies that were developed which go beyond words. These issues are addressed in the following section of this chapter.

The influence of Practical Theological Reflection

My research is influenced by the four stage model of PTR proposed by Swinton and Mowat (2006, p. 95). Stage One of their methodology involves examining current practice in ministry amongst those with disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief. Stage Two entails applying qualitative research methods to excavate what is going on within that current practice and the meaning behind it. Stage Three requires theologically critical reflection upon the practices of the Church (and in this particular case prison chaplaincy) in the light of Scripture and the Christian tradition in order to understand the situation from a perspective of critical faithfulness. Stage Four is that of revising practice in the light of the preceding stages.

Although influenced by Swinton and Mowat's practical theological research methodology, my methodology differs in that my fieldwork ended before I had a chance to reflect theologically with the participants on my findings. My theological reflections upon imprisoned grief were carried out only afterwards at a distance and reflected the different responses I observed in the mind of the prisoner, the institution and amongst chaplains. I see this as a limitation of my research. Nonetheless in the light of these responses I have drawn conclusions and made recommendations for further research.

Stage Two of my research is based on the premise that I am both a practitioner and researcher in practical theology. When I moved prisons as chaplain from HMP Kirkham to HMP Whitemoor in 2009, my research adapted to a new setting as my professional doctoral research continued. As a reflexive practitioner I seek to show how chaplaincy responds theologically, spiritually and practically to the prisoner's experience, which is often counter-cultural to the rest of the prison establishment, having its own distinctive contribution to practice as well as the academy.

In combining practical theological research using participatory action research I began to see the difference faith and the deepening of a spiritual life could have for prisoners. I saw how investigating this could be done collectively to reduce the sense of isolation as an important part of the research.

Designing the fieldwork

The design of the Living with Loss project carried out the principles of the research in order to extract the data which produced the narrative of 'imprisoned grief' and identified how it differs in character from that of disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief. Collaborative decisions about the project were made in the light of the evolving data analysis giving the research design a more organic strategic direction. The optional faith ritual at the end of the course was developed to examine how, if at all, prisoners' faith gave them autonomy over their situation and whether concentrating on the spiritual side of their character increased their sense of being supported whilst in prison. It provided an opportunity for me as a reflective and reflexive practitioner to look further at resources for theological reflection both as chaplain and researching professional in this particular ministry. This research is available to other practitioners to support those away from home in a creative and flexible way when they are faced with a bereavement or loss experience.

I collected qualitative data from the prisoners by recording group sessions of the Living with Loss courses at both HMP Kirkham (LWL K) and HMP Whitemoor (LWL W) with their permission, by collecting flip chart notes made at these course meetings and through collecting pre- and post-course questionnaires. The recordings of the courses at both

prisons were transcribed and the questionnaires evaluated. All gave valuable feedback. These were coded as PreCQK and POCQK and PreCQW and POCQW. The notes made at the time of the support group at HMP Whitemoor were also coded as the Living with Loss support group (LWLSG). It was important to capture the prisoner narrative both from the transcripts and the written feedback because of the below average literacy of most of the participants. According to Prison Reform Trust statistics in 2013, 47% of prisoners have no formal educational qualifications; 21% need help with reading and writing and 41% with education and 40% to improve work related skills.

The transcripts give an all-round picture of the prisoner's emotional development and capacity to learn. As a member of the Prison Service staff I was only allowed to use recording equipment owned by the Prison Service and was assisted in the transcribing process by Prison Service administrative staff. This is a simple and straightforward example of how my research design had to be adapted to the research environment of a prison. As the researcher and member of prison staff I was always aware of the power differential between me and the participants. I address this more fully in the section on ethics. It was essential that the course sessions, support group and the faith rituals were a welcoming and non-threatening environment to disperse any perceived coercion. Uniformed prison staff did not attend and CCTV was not fitted in the chaplaincy. This made a huge difference to

prisoners who were used to being filmed during offending behaviour programmes, which made many feel uncomfortable.

The Living with Loss project was secular in content with an advertised optional faith ritual. None of the posters advertising the course appeared near the chaplaincy centre and men who wanted to attend did not send their replies to me, but to the chaplaincy team which allowed me to retain some neutrality. The recording of course sessions helped me to represent the prisoners' stories as accurately as possible. All of the participants were happy to be recorded and gave their consent to participate in the project including filling in anonymised questionnaires. Participants read through the transcripts which were anonymised at the support group. Heron calls this "authentic collaboration" (Heron 1996, p.152) which requires total immersion by the researcher. I returned the findings to the prisoners and the facilitators for feedback and for the purposes of data accuracy. I have built this in within the research design at each stage of data generation. Participants were asked to make a written agreement that they would be able to attend all sessions. The course sessions took place on a weekday afternoon, so as not to interfere with a morning work routine or visits from family or solicitors. The maximum number of prisoners that could be accommodated was eight, with two facilitators.

This made a difference to the research design as the setting was somewhat more formal than I would have wished, and it obviously had to adapt to the constraints of the secure environment in which it took place. Each prisoner attending had to be accounted for in a prison roll check at the beginning of the afternoon at HMP Kirkham. Prisoners could make their own way to the chaplaincy, which involved a walk outside in the grounds. The prison was then able to confirm the whereabouts of all its prisoners and a roll count declared correct.

At HMP Whitemoor, a list of names was delivered to the different wings in the morning so at movement time after lunch, prisoners were called and escorted to the chaplaincy which was in the heart of the prison. Registration then took place and the names and numbers of prisoners were given to the control room. Due to the large numbers of prisoners moving this often had to be repeated via the radio system and prison officers would be present to do a head count.

Participants were reassured that no one was going to be coerced to say anything and that the Living with Loss course would not proselytise. Ground rules were negotiated as a group and were reiterated at the beginning of each session. A course booklet was given to each participant, so they could reflect before and after course sessions on their learning. The booklet and the questionnaires gave the direction and flow of travel of learning and self-reflection. It referred in appropriate

language to the differences between disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief and the experience of it within an imprisoning environment. In the introductory session ('Making a start') a number of questions helped participants to orientate themselves to thinking about loss in their lives, including bereavement. They listed reactions, feelings and emotions that they had experienced at those times. This gave an overview of the breadth of their experiences.

The differing prison environments were taken into account from the beginning in designing the course in either place. For example, at HMP Kirkham because the majority of prisoners had faced the death of a family member through a long illness, a short clip from the film Shadowlands was shown in order to provoke conversation. At HMP Whitemoor, where the majority of participants were life sentenced prisoners and were responsible for the death of another person, what was most common was the fact that one or more of their grandparents had died recently. A short video clip from *Only Fools and Horses* was shown, where the two lead characters Derek and Rodney come to terms with Grandad's death. This session highlighted as far as possible what each set of prisoners had faced on entering into custody: anticipated grief or bereavement during imprisonment.

Films generally provided a useful way into finding out how the group could address their disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief. Clips

were chosen to provoke discussion about behaviour following grief and the reactions of the characters in the films was initially much easier for the participants to discuss than their own fears and experiences. After a break prisoners were encouraged to speak about some of their own experiences by identifying with the feelings and emotions of the film characters. I developed this method of group work based on my experience of running other groups amongst the prisoner population. The facilitators explained that each session of the course followed the same pattern: ground rules were repeated, there was recapitulation on the previous week's session, an input from leaders, followed by film clip and a discussion, a break and then a wind down time where they could reflect on each session's learning. Each session lasted two hours.

In session two there was a discussion about the caricature of behaviours by members of the television comedy the *Royle* Family during an episode about the death of a neighbour. Death itself was seen as a taboo subject but arguing about possessions and the reading of the will was fair game. It seemed obvious to most in the groups that the characters got caught up in others' grief to avoid the sadness in their own lives. This provided a very effective entrée into a substantive discussion of feelings and emotions evoked by 'facing the reality of loss.' The second half of the session led prisoners to discuss how the same feelings and emotions had also emerged on coming to prison. I instinctively understood their imprisonment as one of loss of their assumptive world of freedom and looked to see whether this hypothesis was reliable

enough to be described as 'imprisoned grief'. Following this session there were three questions for participants about how they hid their feelings and the behaviour that they felt was expected after loss.

Session Three, entitled 'Feelings and reactions associated with loss' focused on other people's reactions to loss and bereavement and provoked a discussion about their own families and friends' experiences. It also explicitly discussed how their own experiences were different now they were in prison as they might face a family illness or death themselves. This weighed heavily on those who were serving lengthy sentences and had no opportunity for day release or home leave. They discussed their own strategies for helping one another despite restrictions on visits and phone calls to family and friends.

The film *Mrs Brown* shows how Queen Victoria was trapped in her grieving process. Many of the customs and behaviours associated with death shown in the film revealed the depth of her isolation after the loss of her husband and the steps that others took to protect her. The experience of feeling stuck within a grieving process was one common to all participants and resonated very obviously with the feeling of being stuck within the prison system. The facilitators explained that leading writers on grief and loss (Kubler-Ross 1969 and Worden 1991) identified stages and phases of loss which did not appear in a set order but were part of a process, which was different and unique for each individual

depending on each individual's circumstances. These theories helped to identify how imprisonment impeded the flow of mourning and grief.

Session Four focused on the consequences of grief and loss. Clips from the film *The Mission* were shown to highlight this. Anger was famously a factor in the pre-meditated killing by one brother of another and the playing out of his self-blame afterwards. This easily provoked discussion about the consequences of wrong actions and the place of emotion in them. This film directly played to their experiences of blaming others or their upbringings for their actions and of subsequent destructive self-blame now that they were serving time. This session was designed with the types of crimes in mind that the participants had committed themselves and sought to extract data relating specifically to how those who were serving time for murder and manslaughter processed the grief of the loss of their victims. This session was delivered only in HMP Whitemoor. At HMP Kirkham this session used a further clip of *Shadowlands* where C. S. Lewis became the sole parent for his children. This created some interesting data as it resonated with several prisoners who were primary carers and the secondary loss that their children faced now that they were in prison.

Session Five was entitled 'Letting go.' It showed a scene from the end of *The Mission*, where the same character needed to let go of his loss. In this session participants looked at what would happen to them if they continued only to hark back to the past, allowing self-punishment for

past actions to exacerbate loss in the present. This session opened up the issue of self-disenfranchisement in a disenfranchising environment. This session followed on easily to Session Six where participants considered scenarios or relationships they wished to let go which were 'imprisoning' them. There was also an opportunity to review the previous sessions and address anything omitted. This session also introduced the option to follow up with a faith ritual and to access further one-to-one support from facilitators if desired and (at HMP Whitemoor) the forming of a support group. This was the prime example of the nature of the research design: an opportunity for prisoners to evaluate for themselves what they needed in addition to the course itself. Faith rituals normally lasted about twenty to thirty minutes in length with a planning session before hand with the appropriate faith chaplain.

Each support meeting differed depending upon who was present. The group ranged in size from ten to fifteen. Subjects included various anniversaries; life without drugs; loss of parents; loss of being a parent; loss of freedom and therefore loss of human contact, both physical and emotional; keeping a journal; self-help literature and a reading list with visit to the library next to the chaplaincy. We built up our own library of books, novels, fact sheets and DVDs which could support them in times of loss. These ideas provide a flexible and creative framework for other practitioners supporting those who are facing loss and bereavement under contained circumstances.

Finally, the research design needed to consider my role as the researcher-practitioner, the ethical framework and the nature of reflexivity within it.

The role of the researcher-practitioner

Gadamer's (1981) model of hermeneutics has strongly influenced my research project. This approach makes me aware of my position as the researcher-practitioner. I am never free of my own prejudices as a former prison chaplain or of my own convictions about the way in which I think these human beings should be treated. There is constant dialogue between the researcher and the prisoner narrative. As a researcher-practitioner, I brought my own presuppositions and pre-understandings and experience to bear in the navigation of this study and production of this thesis. Gadamer says

> If we examine the situation more closely, however, we find that meanings cannot be understood in an arbitrary way. Just as we cannot continually misunderstand the use of a word without it affecting the meaning of the whole, so we cannot stick blindly to our own fore-meaning about the thing if we want to understand the meaning of another (Gadamer 1981, p. 271).

The research has been derived from my experience as a prison chaplain, the prisoner narratives and the theoretical perspectives which were

outlined in chapter two. Gadamer shows that hermeneutics goes beyond human empathy to a creative process where the researcher-practitioner's and the participants' assumptions concerning the meaning of the text are challenged and deepened. A particular example of this happened in the second Living with Loss group when some chose to discuss how their greatest felt loss was realising that despite their youth the length of their sentence made it likely that they would never become a parent - a lifelong loss. Admitting this pain and sexual frustration weighed heavily. It took courage to express it in an all-male group and would never normally have been articulated in such a profound way.

Gadamer believes that research serves the function not only of seeing behaviours, but also modes of being, and he is therefore as interested in the context of the research and its influence as well as the data collected. My thesis articulates how the context of the prison influenced the data that was collected. Swinton and Mowat comment on Gadamer's view

> The images of researcher as separate from the object of study is replaced by a dialectical understanding that suggests the need for dialogue and conversation between the text and the researcher; conversation that does not exclude the researcher's pre-understanding, but constructively draws them into dialogical process (Swinton and Mowat 2006, p. 114).

Gadamer offers a number of ways in which one can interpret experience and several of his concepts can inform practical theology. He argues that interpretations derive from such understanding which always involves a 'fusion of horizons '. Gadamer's model is one which must be open to new experiences and to opening up a new horizon.

> Understanding tradition undoubtedly requires a historical horizon, then. But it is not the case that we acquire this horizon by transposing ourselves into a historical situation. Rather, we must always already have a horizon of understanding. In the process of understanding, a real fusing of horizons occurs - which means that as the historical horizon is projected, it is simultaneously superseded (Gadamer 1981, pp. 303-04.)

He seeks to show that what is familiar to all interpretations is a basic level of understanding or pre-judgement. Our horizon includes pre-understandings and prejudices which are not impediments to understanding but are what affect reaching our understanding. Gadamer (1993, pp.268-69) suggests that our prejudices need to be tested to discern which are helpful and which not. What emerges from them as truthful along with the views of the researcher and the reader form part of his "fusion of horizon" (Gadamer 1993, pp.306-07). Therefore his approach to research goes beyond seeing the narrative of the research participants and the author's meaning to the truth for the readers and

how it becomes alive for them when they themselves become interpreters of it. He sees this as part of the hermeneutical circle which depends upon an event where there is a dialectical conversation like openness towards what we hope to understand. His idea of reaching a horizon following a hermeneutical circle is composed of five moments: a. pre-understandings, b. an experience of being brought up short, c. dialogical interplay, d. a fusion of horizons and e. a final application. It is this staged approach which gathers momentum that has influenced my research design over three stages.

Other scholars have criticised of Gadamer's standpoint. They state that research should not be affected by personal beliefs which are an unnecessary intrusion by the researcher. Gadamer's most notable critic is Jürgen Habermas (1985) who believes his methodology is precisely "uncritical." He sees Gadamer's ontology of understanding as obscuring the way in which power and politics shaped tradition and in turn one's own authoritative position.[7] Habermas prefers a framework for hermeneutics as "a theory of communicative action" (Habermas 1985) which takes into account human interest and the power which appears in the discourse.

As the researcher-practitioner I was familiar with the experiences of anticipatory grieving and bereavement that prisoners faced, but wanted to discuss further with the research participants their feelings and

[7] See Brown (2012) p115 for further discussion of this debate.

emotions in order to examine how they did or did not cope with mourning and grief connected to their victims. This information was then fused in particular with the theoretical perspectives on the pain of imprisonment.

I have found it hugely helpful to use Gadamer's imagery to find disenfranchised grief and self-disenfranchised grief superseded within the prison context by 'imprisoned grief' as a new horizon has developed in my thinking. Gadamer's work offers me an interpretative framework for my research so that as a researcher-practitioner I find the distinction between being an objective or subjective researcher irrelevant, rather seeing myself as one who both reflects (continuing to relate theory to practice) and is also reflexive - questioning assumptions which I had previously taken for granted. Arguing reflexively involves sensitivity to a wide range of interpretations and voices from within my data and a willingness to critique it with the voices of others. This is based on the belief that the researcher cannot be completely neutral or objective, or detached from the knowledge that they are generating; rather, they should seek to understand their role in the process. Both are needed within this research under the umbrella of a professional doctorate in practical theology.

Ethical Framework

Accepting that I am unable to divorce my ethical and moral standpoint about my experiences as a prison chaplain from that of being an objective researcher, I seek therefore to analyse my value-based knowledge based upon a Christian foundation. This in itself had an impact upon my research design and the motivation for conducting this kind of qualitative based research. I had a supportive environment in which to carry out my research and further support through supervision and with my colleagues. This was essential as research participants were vulnerable individuals and unpacking difficult experiences involving grief and loss brought some unwelcome insights into traumatic experiences and situations.

The vulnerability of the research group meant that ethical clearance had to be gained. I completed two ethics procedures - one for the University of Chester and one for the Prison Service. The ethics applications addressed my research aims and objectives, literature review, research plan and methodology, data gathering and the assurance of confidentiality. There was particular focus on what lengths I would go to ensure the security of the prison establishment, avoidance of self-harm and risk of suicide and what one-to-one pastoral care would be in place if this occurred or was attempted.

I was always conscious of how my role as researcher affected the research process in an enclosed environment, where misunderstandings were rife and the participants were potentially vulnerable. Pranee Liamputtong suggests that the prime vulnerabilities of such research group can be their invisibility, their marginality and their lack of opportunity to voice concerns because of a fear that they may not be respected and stigma will then be attached to their social status (Liamputtong 2007, p. 4). There were some complex power dynamics that needed to be acknowledged not only between myself and the other facilitators with the research participants but also between myself and other prison staff. These formed part of my everyday ministry, but had an added sense of complexity now that research was involved. Being a practitioner-researcher added another element to the ongoing challenges of being a civilian member of prison staff. I felt the risk that I would be tempted into taking sides in the interests of the prisoner's wellbeing. Having an awareness of one's own value based judgements was an important part of both parts of my role within the research.

Research participants knew that their participation in the research would have no impact upon their sentence length, parole or access to the chaplaincy service. There were no incentives given to attend the course. Participants were told that they were free to attend as much or as little of the courses, support group meetings, faith rituals and pastoral support as they needed and to end their participation at any time without fear of reprisal by any of the facilitators. They were informed that the research

was investigatory in nature. If they needed to receive treatment during this time then another chaplain or team of mental health nurses would be on hand for an appointment. There was also the opportunity if the need arose to talk to other members of staff about further crimes that they may have committed, rather than this to be discussed within the research. This guarded against emotional distress and the threat of self-harm. Every effort was made to ensure that there was no invasion of privacy which could destroy the trust between the prisoner and the researcher. The research was not an investigation or a programme designed to understand and offer desistance from crime in the future. It was advertised as a non-offence related project.

As the Living with Loss project developed there was a sense of ownership over the interventions as improvements were made within HMP Whitemoor to be effective and sustainable. Research participants were actively involved in these and needed to be in agreement with them. They became stakeholders in the research at different levels, rather than just paying lip service in some way to the idea of involvement. This avoided their exploitation.

With prisoners as the main participants, I built in an understanding of reflexivity to the research to remain as neutral as possible. I had an insight into the way things happen within the Prison Service - I possessed insider knowledge: this worked in a way such as Martyn Denscombe describes, as a "bonus" (Denscombe 2007, p. 129). I took

into account the environment and the nature of the practitioner-researcher / doctoral student relationships with the research participants as a crucial factor in addressing the nature of 'imprisoned grief.' I examined my own role as one of who could help enable, empower and humanise arrangements by challenging the status quo appropriately within the prison security system about funeral attendance. I found myself not only an advocate for prisoners attending funerals, but also advising the authorities on risk management of the prisoner if he did not attend.

The ethics procedure sharpened how I would measure the needs of imprisoned grievers through gathering qualitative data via pre- and post-course questionnaires, recording course meetings and making notes at the times of the faith rituals and support group. These procedures ensured that qualitative data analysis was carried out in order to improve and extend the course to ensure that it specifically address participants needs based on the findings. My working hypothesis was that there would need to be some changes directly resourced within the prison setting via the chaplaincy department. At the same time the Living with Loss course materials were going through an approval by the Open College Network for accreditation and so a similar process of verification and production of learning outcomes via before and after questionnaires took place.

I was very aware of my bias both as researcher and practitioner. The importance of reflexivity rather than objectivity enabled me to own my influence on the research process. The research findings were important as I built up the conceptual framework of 'imprisoned grief' as a researcher, yet supporting prisoners' spiritual lives as a practitioner was also a demand. The loss of the group represented the loss of my support of them which the participants acted out in a protest letter to the prison authorities at its closure. I was not aware of their depth of feeling until the close of the group. I was aware that they continued to live with 'imprisoned grief' and that although liberation and enfranchisement were its long term goals; this work was incomplete and ongoing. When discussing the ending of the support group with me, the first stages of bereavement were observed as members of the group displayed denial and anger. They did not want to come to a group with a new facilitator. One year later I was able informally to interview all the prisoners who remained at HMP Whitemoor and record the adjustments that they had made to living with imprisoned grief, through enfranchisement and liberation from it as a direct result of being involved in the research.

This concludes Chapter Three on justifying my choice of research approach, methodology, an outline the qualitative research methods research design and the ethical framework. This piece of research is one of practical theology which as Brown says: "sees method in the text interpretation as a legitimate concern, but insists that it be understood against the backdrop of the inescapably historical, concretely situated

interpretation of human existence itself" (Brown 2012, p. 115).This chapter is followed by an analysis of the data which suggests that what I uncovered is more than disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief, rather it is imprisoned grief.

Chapter Four

Unearthing loss experiences

Introduction

Four dimensions of the prisoner experience of grief and loss emerged from the project questionnaires, from transcripts from the two six week courses I facilitated at HMP Kirkham and HMP Whitemoor and from notes made during the other three courses. These reflect the differences in the way in which the two prisons place restrictions on prisoners' freedoms depending on whether they are in Open and Closed conditions. This chapter initially focusses on how these four experiences of loss emerged, the reasons for and the impact of attending a course like Living with Loss. In the second half of the chapter I examine how the prisoner narratives are connected with the intensification of the emotions which arose between the loss of freedom and the other three experiences of grief and loss: (i) anticipatory loss and grief whilst inside, (ii) bereavement during imprisonment and (iii) loss as a factor for criminal behaviour including loss due to homicide.

The PreCQK and PreCQW highlight the reasons why a prisoner might attend a course like Living with Loss. The POCQW and POCQK reveal its impact. Prisoners gave the following explicit reasons for attending the course: death of a sister through a drug overdose, coming to prison, the death of a relative, the loss of family contact, beginning a life

sentence, being away from close family, family break up, separation, criminal activity, disease, divorce, illness, redundancy, mental ill health, emigration, deception, representing both emotional and material loss. The POCQW and POCQK asked how the course had helped. Replies included: "finding good out of a bad situation, prayer, remembering the positives, celebrating a life, new opportunities arose, closure, space, being honest with self, not being afraid, not being embarrassed to ask for help and to have a good cry."

Life events resulting in grief and loss were then compounded by imprisonment. Participants often reacted either by feeling overwhelmed or being in denial. Grief was on hold. I use the term 'imprisoned grief' to describe this experience. This was distinctively different from disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief because of the prisoners' feedback and helped to shape the nine week course which addressed grief and loss from an imprisoned position. The collected data was used to develop an understanding of each prisoner's experience. I found that certain themes and experiences formed a common core. Moustakas points out that such heuristic research aims to retain "the essence of the person in the experience" (Moustakas 1990, p. 39). In an environment where individual dignity was constantly under threat, participants' unique situations were recorded with their consent.

One example is of a prisoner who felt abandoned at the news of his grandfather's imminent death. This feeling was exacerbated by knowing that he would not be able to attend the funeral, as he was not next of kin: "I was in bits when I phoned my mum" (LWL W). This participant had lost his rights as a free citizen due to public acts of wrongdoing but, critically, interpreted it as his right to grieve being denied. Doka says

> It is as if society says, not only do we not only recognize your need to grieve, we also do not recognize your relationship in the first place. It is reminiscent of the double slap routine of vaudeville in which the victim is hit both ways, once coming and once going (Doka (1989, p. 18).

During the Living with Loss course prisoners spoke openly of the connections that they made between the grief that they felt when arriving at prison, some of whom had been long on remand or bail, mourning the loss of how life had been

> All the way through I went not guilty, right up until the last moment. I received death threats against my children, if I did not plead guilty. I believed I was going home all the way though the trial (Prisoner W).

and

> I was so ashamed. I was advised to plead not guilty by my solicitor and I got a really long sentence because of it. I was in total denial. I am living with the consequences of pleading not guilty...I

> knew it would have caused chaos if knowing that I was responsible for his death, so I just kept quiet in the trial. (Prisoner W).

Colin Murray Parkes classes numbness and denial as the first "phase of mourning" (Murray Parkes 2009, p.29) following bereavement. What was identified on the course was a yearning for the return of a loved one and the anger that ensued when it was realised that was not possible, followed by the disorientation and despair that the loss caused. Broad comparisons abound between the bereavement of loss of life and of freedom. One prisoner recorded his arrest: "I felt sick to my stomach, but I was relieved that they had as I was no longer looking over my shoulder anymore. The fear and panic at being found out were gone." (LWL W) The course provided a safe and containing place to air such feelings.

This gives a background picture of some kinds of experiences and losses that prisoners faced whilst in custody. Four dimensions of different types of grief and loss will now be examined and discussed in more depth in relation to the loss of freedom.

Loss of freedom due to imprisonment

The PreCQW and PreCQK illustrate, in this first portrait, how the loss of physical freedom inhibited participants from moving on. One prisoner summed it up succinctly: "the course could possibly be expanded so as

to not just be for bereavement but for all aspects of being in prison" (POCQW). Specific comments gave voice to the experience of living without physical freedom with an ongoing accumulation of loss experiences.

> The most important thing that I lost when I came into prison was loss of contact with my family and not enough money to be able to phone my family, and also the fact that I only get a visit once a week. (Prisoner K)
>
> I am also the eldest in the family and it was difficult and I thought that my Gran might die when in prison. You can only put a certain amount of money onto your pin phones and I feel like it is an imposition to ask my family for extra money, especially when I know that they have to bring up my brothers and sisters. (Prisoner K)

The sense of discredit brought upon family members is a bond shared between all prisoners, even though it is very often left unacknowledged openly.

The loss of the chance for physical comfort led to feelings of powerlessness: "I really miss having a shoulder to cry on, a hug or an arm around my back. I'm not really a Dad anymore" (LWL W). This participant felt impotent to take up a role as head of the family, as the eldest child or as father in the household.

> Has your position within the family changed now? (Facilitator)
>
> Yes, there is nobody left and I am the eldest, I have four brothers and four sisters, a lot is resting on me on the outside... I am the head of the family. I look forward to be able to help them with their homework, but of course I can't at the moment...they are all finding it really hard at the moment, two of my sisters have fallen out since the funeral...and I have not been able to go out there and bang their heads together and sort things out when they have been falling out. (Prisoner K)

The frustration of not being able to act as the family mediator was dispiriting and added pain to the situation.

Another prisoner described how imprisonment had restricted his access to professional help about the loss of his livelihood – and therefore his felt purpose in life - even in Open conditions

> I have lost my factory and I have lost my business and also I have lost my business partner. No help in this prison for me to be able to deal with these things, they think that I should be happy with the fact that I am in CAT D and that my door is open. (Prisoner K)

It is salutary to underline that he had no access to a computer, internet or regular telephone to be able to recover his business before release, which inevitably reinforced his feelings of disappointment in himself.

Often these feelings overrode the simplest 'common-sense' point of view – prisoners were only in these situations because their own actions.

Isolation was a dominant theme, compounded by a fear of being a burden: "sometimes the feelings are personal and we don't want to burden innocent parties with our problems" (PreCQK). One PreCQW recorded that there was "no peaceful place to go and cry and share one's grief" in prison. This was a contrast of considerable significance between the Open and closed prison. At HMP Kirkham, prisoners could come to the Chapel or multi-faith room for quiet reflection at any time. At HMP Whitemoor, a visit to the Chapel and multi-faith room needed to be organised and escort provided by a prison officer.

Participants felt their sorrows were made worse by the "lack of privacy, the insensitive nature of the culture and where prison is a culture where weakness is viewed as an invite to saying – 'make me a victim'" (POCQW). One participant said that there were "always people around but not ones who really cared" (LWL K). PreCQW, PreCQK and Session Three of the course unearthed the feelings and reactions after loss as: "powerlessness, shock, anger, isolation, suicidal, lost, let down, sad, depressed, lashing out, a big hole, relief, hurt, anxious, rebellious and feeling irresponsible."

Participants in the Living with Loss courses often felt that prison staff exacerbated rather than soothed the problem, intentionally or otherwise. Edwards' study of American male prisoners showed a frequent lack of

communication between staff about who was mourning, partly due to the shift system and partly due to suspicion of being manipulated.

> Findings suggest that for inmate grievers, mutual avoidance strategies make their grief and loss a largely solitary experience...the evidence suggests that whatever grief-related interaction does occur was largely perceived as uncomfortable and not particularly helpful (Edwards 2000, p. 69).

Participants on the course recorded earlier cumulative loss experiences prior to imprisonment which surface.

> I've only lost three people in all my life, my wife and my kid brother, who was sudden...but my Grandad had lung cancer and he had it for years, before I came in here...he was losing a lot of weight but we all knew his time was up. (Prisoner W)

For many at HMP Whitemoor, living in a loss environment had become a way of being. Some prisoners serving twenty years or more had become loners, feeling isolated with no real relationships to carry them through. The PreCQW gave ample anecdotal evidence of how this had come about: "I find it hard to trust anyone with my feelings as it makes me feel vulnerable; I feel shy and uncomfortable, it is hard to put emotions into words and I am scared and worried about people's reactions and don't want to feel embarrassed; I am scared because I may not be able to control my emotions and let them get the better of me and

I am introverted and clam up easily." For some, no investment was made in fostering trusting and compassionate relationships outside the prison. This attitude was transferred inside the prison between themselves and staff and fellow prisoners. Liebling et al. recorded the atmosphere at HMP Whitemoor.

> Staff-prisoner relationships were generally distant at Whitemoor. Levels of trust between staff and prisoners (but also elsewhere) were low. This led to a poor information flow...A high level of fear, among staff and prisoners, was having a negative impact on all aspects of prison life (Liebling et al.2011, pp. 1, 3).

The effects of the loss of freedom due to imprisonment naturally resounded throughout the whole of the Living with Loss project. I now turn to three particular aspects that transpired of anticipatory grieving, bereavement during imprisonment and loss as a factor in and as a result of criminal behaviour.

Anticipatory Grieving

Anticipatory grief can be triggered by a number of different circumstances. Expecting a family death may come with other non-death related loss experiences like extra charges, lengthening of a sentence or refusal of parole, which can set off a chain reaction. Hockey, Katz and Small describe anticipatory grief as a process "whereby a person, it is claimed, rehearses the bereaved role and begins working through the

profound changes that typically accompany the loss process" (Hockey, Katz and Small (2001, p. 101). This is not always possible for prisoners when they are disenfranchised and self-disenfranchise.

A particularly common scenario is when a prisoner discovers that a relative is dying. He panics and he wants to be able to say to the relative that he is sorry for what he has done. He sometimes feels the guilt of the stress that he has put his family under which he may not have acknowledged openly before. Naturally he may feel that the shock of his coming to prison has contributed in some way to the progression of their illness itself

Imprisonment isolates the prisoner who cannot share in the care before death, the funeral, the farewells and the professional and family support available during the last weeks of a loved one's life. Anticipatory grief can be left unaddressed for those in prison. They feel disenfranchised from their relatives. The Prison Service makes provision for chaplains to provide professional care, but not the freedom in decision making about how it can always be employed to its full advantage.

Masterton's article about her work with CRUSE bereavement care in Scotland quotes the case of a prisoner whose brother committed suicide shortly after his incarceration and who received professional counselling himself afterwards

> I started to think right away that I was to blame for Robbie dying...that if I hadn't got the jail it would never have happened...the guilt just got bigger and bigger...it wasn't long before I was drowning in it...I felt absolutely totally ashamed of myself (Masterton 2014, p, 58).

Another prisoner described what happened when his father was diagnosed with cancer during his time at HMP Whitemoor and the internal process of questioning the reason for the illness, rather than the death.

> It still hurts but a lot of it is the anger. It is diminished because you have had the time to prepare yourself...if someone gets diagnosed with cancer...the shock, you know is why have they got that, rather than why have they died? (Prisoner W)

Another prisoner described the fact that he knew that during his fifteen year sentence he would need to face the death of his grandmother with whom he had lived since being a teenager. He was worried about how the stigma of his crime had affected her and that her death would become a moment which drew attention to his crime rather than to celebrating her life: "I have this underlying worry of how I'm going to deal with it and that it is just going to dig it all back up again" (LWL W).

He had already anticipated that he would not be able to attend her funeral and worried too about who would comfort his own mother as he was her only child.

The PreCQK also recorded grieving could be expected when confiscation orders were served on prisoners during their sentence, seizing assets, including house, car and savings. One prisoner saw his family relationships slowly begin to disintegrate: "[There was] a loss of assets and luxuries, which meant that I was no longer the provider, losing work and future employment prospects." (LWL W) This proved very damaging to his marriage.

Another example of anticipatory grief was the bringing of further charges during a long sentence, because of new evidence or a crime committed during imprisonment. At HMP Kirkham extra time on a sentence mostly resulted in being returned to closed conditions – an obvious regression. Anger could escalate alarmingly in closed conditions: "some people self-harm, take anger out on others around them; some strike out in violence; punching the wall; snap at the littlest thing; not tolerating others or showing compassion and never leaving their cells" (POCQK).

Masterton suggested that "being alone" (Masterton 2014, p. 61) with anticipatory grief was the biggest risk factor in the prisoners she counselled. She found that prisoners often used illicit drugs and self-harmed in a bid to escape the anticipated grief. The risk of suicide was

heightened. Those who had reacted violently were much more likely to be held in a segregated area of the prison for twenty-three hours a day, isolating the harm to others but exacerbating the isolation of the troubled individual.

Anticipatory grieving, as a phenomenon, was discussed during the Living with Loss course at HMP Kirkham in the context of the film *Shadowlands*, where participants saw how C. S. Lewis nursed his young wife from cancer and became a single parent to her sons. He saw this as a spiritual crisis

> Meanwhile, where is God? But go to Him, when your help is desperate, when all other helping in vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face...Not that I am (I think) in much danger of ceasing to believe in God. The real danger is coming to believe such dreadful things about him (C. S. Lewis 1961, pp. 4-5).

This provoked one of the participants to describe his life as a single parent.

> Your confidence goes and everything...We are all the same, we are gliders, but your wife, you don't realise how much she controlled everything and then she is not there. She would deal with the kids, the clothes, the bills everything, you don't realise that. I do it all now as it as five months ago my wife died...One day you have to wear the dress and the next day the trousers, it's hard. Kids

> confide in their mother more than their father. We were the strict brigade, where it is hard for men to talk, you think if you are trying to be the Mum, 'am I being too soft?' and also you have to be the father where you have to correct them and tell them off. (Prisoner K)

The experiences of anticipatory grief that prisoners faced were wide ranging. This disenfranchisement was exacerbated by incarceration which itself was not just about the lack of physical freedom, but was affected by staff, fellow prisoners and family members who could have a negative impact on their ability to cope.

Bereavement during imprisonment

Experiencing bereavement during a prison sentence exacerbated the awareness of loss. Prisoners felt vulnerable from the moment of hearing the news from a stranger, like a chaplain, rather than from a family member. Escorted compassionate release for those in closed conditions reinforced already highly charged emotions for prisoners and families alike. In an Open prison like HMP Kirkham the risks associated with a prisoner being released on a temporary licence on compassionate grounds were obviously reduced. The practical implications of attending a family funeral whilst in custody often left prisoners feeling further ostracised.

> I was very restricted, I was getting there at 11.00am in the morning and having to come back for 4.00pm, when I went to my girlfriend's funeral it was 1.00pm in the afternoon...when I got to the house everyone was waiting there for me. The funeral car was there and the coffin was in the back and everyone had to wait for me, I had to walk 30-40 yards to the house to go and get changed and I felt like I was properly on show. I felt bad and embarrassed. I felt like I had held the cortege up. I felt bad about what had happened and this made me feel even worse. (Prisoner K)

and

> Do you feel more ostracised now that all the family know that you are in prison? (Facilitator)
>
> Yes, I only just talk to my sister. I have had two bereavements and this has really entrenched me in my grieving process. I also feel very depressed, my grieving process has not finished even though I thought I could handle things. (KFG)

Further effects of bereavement whilst in custody were reported in the PreCQW like "isolation; unable to talk to people openly; no one to listen to you; you can't always say goodbye in the way you want to in prison; having to deal with it yourself; having more stress on your shoulders on top of being in prison and helpless and the insensitive nature of the culture."

Chaplains can do something to reduce this sense of isolation by facilitating family chaplaincy visits, when there is sad news to impart as a means of enfranchising prisoners in Open conditions. These visits are in addition to weekend home leave and release on temporary licence. Enfranchising opportunities were seen as "extremely helpful especially if I can invite my sister in and sort out the problems we are having about the funeral arrangements, it would be helpful to be able to have that time together...to be able to do that but something separate would be very helpful" (KFG). Disenfranchised grief was addressed and moments for reflection held as an expression of respect for the departed. The chaplain acted as a bridge between the prisoner and his partner or parents. Other enfranchising activities like a graveside visit and the scattering of ashes during Home Leave or Release on Temporary Licence could naturally help to acknowledge that bereavement not only changed a family dynamic but marked the transition itself symbolically.

The Living with Loss project recorded how prisoners struggled to cope with bereavement: "When people try to console you, you push them away with your behaviour because you can't handle it" (LWLK). Masterton's study in Scotland records a prisoner saying bereavement was a "mortification of the self" as "it cut the soul right out of me...it was like dying inside...like I was the dead one." (Masterton 2014, p. 59). Other prisoners felt closer to their families at times of bereavement, "they are probably stronger than they have ever been through my Granny's death" (LWLK).

In response to the question "What has helped you move forward after loss?" (PreCQW and PreCQK), prisoners recorded that while the sympathy they received from staff and other inmates could help, much the most important was "being with and support from family"; visiting the grave and the fact that only my family know everything about me."(PreCQW and PreCQK) Three of the PreCQK and one of the transcripts (LWL K) recorded the fact that participants had been denied the opportunity to attend a family funeral of family whilst in custody.

> Were you able to send your Auntie Mary a card? (Facilitator)
>
> Yes.
>
> How did you get to buy the card? (Facilitator)
>
> I got my family to buy it and send it on my behalf. Mary was asking for me to go but I felt like it was just falling on deaf ears. I could understand it if someone was trying to pull the wool over your eyes, but this was genuine. (Prisoner K)
>
> So how has this affected your family relationships? (Facilitator)
>
> I still manage to get visits but things are very awkward, it was my mother's brother who died and she really wanted me to go there and it has really made me look not in a good light, it made me feel worthless towards them. (Prisoner K)

> How are you going to pay your last respects once you get released? (Facilitator)
>
> I am going to be able to go and see my Auntie Mary and visit the grave. I am going to be able to lay some flowers. (Prisoner K)

For the women in Harner, Hentz and Evangelista's study (where prisoners were not permitted to attend any funerals, even of their next of kin) a disbelief of death lingered long before they reached a phase of denial.

> Women spoke of not having closure because they did not participate in the funerals or see the gravesite. Although they all acknowledged that death was real, there was an element of disbelief, a sense that it was not real until they could actually see it for themselves (Harner, Hentz and Evangelista 2011, p.458).

A picture of a double sense of loss builds up. Incarceration denies freedom to grieve, often resulting in self-disenfranchisement. When a death in the family occurs these feelings resurface and grief can exhibit itself as pathological, rather than as a natural pattern in life under these circumstances.

Funerals are major life events, helping people to express what is known and believed about an individual. They recognize both the internal and external change in the relationship with the deceased. Death brings the physical supplies of love, companionship, nurture and purpose to an

end. The inner world needs rebuilding in order to be able to trust that this can happen again. Being denied these opportunities means that rebuilding is much harder. Doka says "the rite of the funeral publicly testifies to the right to grieve" (Doka 2002, p. 9). It is the opportunity to say goodbye in gratitude for the life lived, to acknowledge the contribution that the deceased made to the world, to express condolences, to express one's faith, to recognise the ending of life and the hope of new beginnings.

As a ritual the funeral aids the grief process in three different ways. First, psychologically, it provides a framework for our feelings of grief and anxiety; second, theologically and philosophically, it gives existential meaning in order to make sense of our experience and third, sociologically, being able to share this experience with others allows re-acceptance into society with a new status. Kelly recognises that the funeral is but one ritual amongst many that can support the grief process. A funeral offers "both an eschatological and retrospective opportunity" (Kelly 2008, pp. 69-72) of looking forward to the life of the world to come and back at a life already fulfilled.

Disenfranchised prisoners who are refused the opportunity to attend funerals are denied a societal event too since a death rite is a social act. The significance of the funeral for the living is to supply resolution and, as a public display of grief, the ritual sets a limit on mourning which can

then help bring closure. This is denied to the prisoner who is either restricted in what they can attend or cannot attend at all.

Those who were granted permission to leave prison were often restricted to attending the Church or crematorium service but not a graveside burial or scattering of ashes. Again final closure for the prisoner and their family altogether could be disjointed and incomplete. One particular comment seemed to sum up much of what was lost through imprisonment in the area of sentimental value that could not have been predicted before incarceration

> I know that families have a lot of problems when they share out all their belongings…I am really not interested in the jewellery or the furniture but it is the shells, things we collected on holiday are what are important to me. I am in here and will never see them again. (Prisoner K)

These items precisely continued the bonds of attachment to the deceased. It was easy to understand how such a seemingly minor, even petty, experience could further dispirit prisoners and add to the general process of disenfranchisement and self-disenfranchisement as a way of coping.

When prisoners discovered that they could not attend a funeral they often asked for prayers to be said at communal acts of worship in the chaplaincy or to light a candle after communion. On the day of the

funeral prisoners brought in a picture of the deceased or a memory to share so they could imagine themselves paying their last respects at the funeral itself. This in no way took the place of a community funeral, but did provide a personalised ritual of succour, comfort and reconciliation. Doka describes these alternative ritual moments as an opportunity "to acknowledge a distinct aspect of a person's identity" (Doka 2002, p. 140). Although denied the opportunity to participate in the funeral planning process outside, in these moments prisoners had control over what they said and did to take their leave of their loved one. These became moments of enfranchisement.

Funerals can provide a gateway to explore a traumatic or a compounded loss. A photograph or an object can provide a focus in these situations.

> It was like when somebody killed himself that I was sharing a pad with in a prison that I was in, and he had given me a t-shirt. That was the only thing that really kept me going through all the bereavement...it was something I had to hold onto. I have his bottle of holy water which I have now got in my cell. (Prisoner K)

Grieving was a very confusing and hard place to be.

> I think your feelings are very mixed up, you seem to react to please people...they are happy so I can't show them I am grieving and put them on a downer... it is hard to let your feelings out, it is hard to express them, and that it my personal thing. (Prisoner K)

Grief often acts as a bar to socialisation. Parkes (2009, pp.183-191) notes that ostracism is a generally prevalent social attitude towards the newly bereaved in any circumstances. Grief in others arouses uncomfortable feelings, almost suggesting that a person is somehow tainted by the death of a loved one. Finally, in extracting bereavement experiences from the data, the POCQW and POCQK asked, "What is difficult about dealing with loss in prison for you?" Prisoners answered this question differently from the way in which they had answered it initially in the PreCQW and PreCQK, using words to express their emotions, rather than just the negative practical realities of the situation. Prisoners described themselves as "speechless, useless, stuck, locked away, ashamed, unable to grieve, feeling bad, that this is my fault, dishonest about my feelings and suffering." Bereavement made "everything difficult." This was exacerbated by "not being there" and therefore "not moving on." There was the ironic ambivalence of finding "no privacy or freedom" and "isolation" as both sides of the same coin in facing loss.

Such descriptions from the questionnaires reveal the intrapsychic dimension to disenfranchised grief. These elements arise from within the self, and comprise covering up one's own lack of acknowledgement and recognition of grief, with shame constantly being perpetuated, through an imagined perception by others. Kauffman says shame

> Safeguards and nurtures our relationship to the sacred. The very differentiation of the sacred and the profane exists by virtue of

> shame; for without it, the profane would destroy the sacred and then destroy itself. The protective function of shame operates in the sanctioning of grief to secure a human and sacred space for the experience and expression of grief (Kauffman 1989, p.26).

Be that as it may, shame also sets off an unconscious fear of abandonment, already pronounced in prisoners, as they negotiate their way through prison life feeling ashamed not only of their imprisoned status but also ashamed of their emotions and feelings in the face of the grieving process. The Living with Loss project provided a secure human and sacred space to express their grief.

At HMP Kirkham one prisoner described how he had felt about his shameful feelings towards his victim.

> It's been difficult to talk about their feelings towards the victim and I have felt shame in facing up to painful emotions and to stop blaming others and to accept as an adult that I have made some bad decisions. (Prisoner K)

This required the prisoner to be able to address his own defences and the narcissistic injuries that he carried to defend him against encountering his own shamefulness. The Living with Loss project could not provide in-depth opportunities for this to happen. Participants needed to be dependent upon what Pattison calls "a certain openness to

the complexity and apparent incorrigibility of dysfunctional shame" (Pattison 2000, p.228) in order to address this fully.

Shame rears its head again just before release. Bereavement and cumulative loss give a good enough reason for this prisoner to contemplate a life without prison as soon as possible.

> What about this bereavement and how does it make you feel about re-offending in the future? (Facilitator)
>
> I have had enough I am not coming back here, this is the last time. Stress and bereavement have made me feel like this. (Prisoner K).

Facing the place where they last saw a loved one alive is a difficult prospect: "Just walking into a home, you know, it might have been the last time you were in that house was with that loved one... it's difficult to pick up where you left off." (LWL K)

This prisoner felt anxious and ill prepared for this experience and was looking forward to his home leaves which would help him to face fears head on before he was fully released. This kind of experience is an example of what the Announced Inspection Report of the Chief Inspector of Prisons found in HMP Kirkham during 2009 just after the Living with Loss course finished: "Chaplains should have routine involvement in resettlement, risk assessment and post-release work" (HMCIP Report HMP Kirkham 2009, section 10.44) p. 36).

Unresolved grief can complicate transition between being in prison and being released. Not finding a pathway in facilitating grieving in prison could be a way of colluding with the denial of the pains of imprisonment. One prisoner commented on the Living with Loss course as an antidote: "What I found helpful about the course was that it enabled me to narrow down my emotional problems to two particular things so that I can now move forwards within another arena" (POCQW).

Loss as a factor in criminal behaviour and loss due to homicide

The two themes of loss as a factor in criminal behaviour and loss due to homicide, although different in detail, are connected with criminality being the consistent factor. Cumulative losses and complex grief reactions can be one of the factors and reasons for offending. Cumulative bereavements are commonly cited as factors in criminal behaviour (Hammersley and Ayling, 2006). Participants spoke of this openly, "The reason that I have had ended up in prison is because of my bereavement"(K FG) and "I got locked up just two months after my mother had died and I committed the offence just after she died and I just felt like I put it all on hold, I went downhill rapidly." (LWL K) This prisoner exposes most straightforwardly the double loss of his mother and his freedom due to the seriousness of his offending. Other

comments from the POCQW were more tangential but still suggested that bereavement was somehow linked to criminal behaviour.

As the course progressed at HMP Whitemoor a written response said "the course has made me think about the loss of my victim" (POCQW). This alerted me to how for some prisoners even the death of the victim was not only a trauma but an experience of grief - both of which were magnified by a long prison sentence. Edwards says

> Many believed their grief and pain over the loss was under recognized or not recognized at all by those on the outside, and one third of the grief sample felt that the nature of their crime or crimes had a deleterious impact on the level of grief recognition and subsequent support they received from external family and friends...for these reasons, inmate grievers often suffer a considerable level of external social supportive disenfranchisement during their grief adjustment (Edwards 2000, pp. 66-67).

Only once was death of the victim of crime a specific topic for discussion at HMP Whitemoor following the watching of the film, *The Mission*. In this film, participants saw penance carried out by the murderer, rather than him being put into prison. Reminding participants that they were attending the course voluntarily helped them to distinguish the difference between the Living with Loss course and an offending behaviour programme or therapeutic group, where it would be expected that they would discuss their own offending. During their faith ritual

and follow up meeting a year later two course participants did disclose details of how their victims had died and that although one victim was known to them and the other was not, they still grieved for them and felt ashamed in the dock in front of the victim's families for causing their deaths. The context of these revelations seemed to make a difference to their levels of trust in opening up to the depth of suffering experienced.

In conclusion, the thematic data analysis reveals that the Living with Loss project provided a more complex and traumatic picture of grief and loss than would normally be identified as disenfranchised or self-disenfranchised grief. It shows the variety of situations faced by participants in custody. Imprisonment itself exacerbated matters, evoking anxiety associated with anticipatory grief, mourning associated with bereavement, cumulative grief and pathological grief as contributing factors to crime and the accompanying shame of grieving the loss of the victim in cases of homicide. These four distinctive pictures stand out in the data as ways in which grief and loss became 'imprisoned' both internally in the mind and soul of a prisoner and externally trapping them in their physical world.

By bringing to the surface these experiences I am able to clearly articulate the limitations of the definitions of disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised grief in a prison environment, favouring a move to a distinctive definition of imprisoned grief. I came to this not only through hearing the narratives of the prisoners, but through my experience of

them as a Chaplain in assisting them to make sense of their cumulative experiences of grief under such restrictive circumstances thus recognising the interplay of institutional factors which played a significant role in the prisoners lived experience and contribute to the definition of imprisoned grief.[8]

As a new concept 'imprisoned grief' extends previous definitions of mourning, grief and loss within a specific context. An example of this is found in Worden's definition of mourning as task orientated and gives: "the mourner some sense of leverage and hope that there is something that he or she can actively do" (Worden 1991, p. 35). This can be impeded in different ways by all parties: the prisoner themselves, staff, family and friends. The tasks that Worden describes of accepting the reality of the loss, to work through the pain and the grief, and adjusting to an environment in which the deceased is missing and emotionally to relocate the deceased and move on can be achieved if a griever is enfranchised. Worden's first two tasks of mourning were addressed by the Living with Loss course curriculum. However, the final two tasks were much more difficult because of the physical location of the participants. Detecting this sticking point and acknowledging the institutional dynamics that prohibit them from happening acted as a turning point in the research to naming this phenomenon as 'imprisoned grief.'

[8] See page 64

Although I acknowledge Attig's (2004, p. 204) position in arguing for mourning and grief to be seen as a human right associated with dignity , his research still does not go far enough in identifying the physical and emotional constraints place on prisoners either by themselves or by the institution which my research uncovered. This research suggests that what is unique about 'imprisoned grief' is a combination of the physical imprisonment which inhibits grief, rendering individuals and families powerless through restrictive access, an exacerbation and accumulation of losses suffered by prisoners, leaving them lonely and vulnerable where a lack of perspective can breed to a build -up of traumatic grief. The circumstances under which prisoners are held lead to an intensification and a doubling up of an experience of grief and loss due to loss of freedom and coping with a loss experience such as bereavement, terminal illness or employment or family. There is a sense of disorientation within a family when someone is incarcerated and shame can be a factor in intensifying this grief experience.

For some prisoners , the Living with Loss project demonstrates how the grieving process can be facilitated, addressed and supported whilst in prison. Both the POCQK and POCQW record the fact that the course had helped prisoners to "accept my loss and move on" produced "closure, come to terms with my loss, forgiveness, rehabilitation, feeling happier and able to move on, getting on with my life, letting go of the past, living with it, time is the way in which I will move forward, feeling normal again, staying busy and being grateful for the time that I did

have with the person I lost". The Living with Loss course enabled them to work through and live with the pain of grief and loss. Naming 'imprisoned grief' from a critical distance helped me as a researcher to gain a sense of perspective upon their situation as an ex Chaplain I was no longer imprisoned by their situation.

My next chapter outlines the response that the Living with Loss project made to what had been unearthed about their loss experiences to counter the institutional response which magnified their experiences of disenfranchisement.

Chapter Five

Responses to Imprisoned Grief

Introduction

Chapter Five discusses further the complex picture of grief and loss uncovered in the Living with Loss project which was 'imprisoned' internally in the mind of the prisoner and externally within the prison environment. A distinctive set of emerging spiritual practices, religious and practical coping mechanisms often with practical implications is considered in the second half of this chapter. These are illuminated further by looking at the aspects of them that might resonate with the theologian Jürgen Moltmann's experiences as a prisoner of war. He found in this a searing spiritual experience which resulted in his conversion to an active Christianity which led him becoming one of the most celebrated theologians of his day. The public presence of those 'imprisoned' in their grief whilst in prison, challenged normal bereavement patterns and warranted further investigation from both a professional and academic perspective. These particular prisoners lives and their parallel lived experience with that of Jurgen Moltmann, brought me an academic challenge as a practical theologian as I reflect on the theology at the heart of this thesis. This theology in turn challenged me as a practitioner.

I not only propose that 'imprisoned grief' is a new phenomenon, but that it can be enfranchised, liberated and transformed in the Living with Loss project.

Internal responses in the mind of the prisoner

Living with the grief of causing bereavement through homicide increased the levels at which vulnerability remained 'hidden' within the prisoner. This subject was not discussed in the initial six week courses at HMP Kirkham and HMP Whitemoor. It appeared in the nine week course curriculum as a direct response to the feedback from participants in the support group at HMP Whitemoor. It was approached by seeing the offender as one who could grieve the loss of his victim.

This self-perception was taken to extreme levels: "...so if I lose it with one person I've lost the whole of myself" (LWL W.) The life of the victim is caught up in the loss of this participant's sense of belonging. This can be cumulative for life sentence prisoners, who other prisoners saw in a different league from them, "You lose a bit of yourself as well… I doubt if it's a bit of innocence inside but you do you lose a bit of yourself, you know D's loss, there is a bit of him that has been lost"(LWL W). In death of another a part of the self is removed.

'Imprisoned grief' is a distressing experience in the mind of the prisoner. In the prisoner narratives there are often occasions where the prisoners

referred to being "locked up" for their deeds and "locked in"(LWL W) to a pattern of 'imprisoned grief'. Being locked up and locked in has connotations of being judged, which seems to extend beyond committal and sentencing. The image of being locked out chimes with prisoners' experience of being shut out of family life as a factor in 'imprisoned grief.' Inverting the image to those who should be locked *in* prison precisely so that they can be kept *out* echoes not just the attitude of some of those who work in prison but in society's general feeling of the worthlessness of prisoners. The sense of worthlessness was internalised by the prisoner and resulted in loss of self-worth and self-esteem.

Indeterminate life sentence prisoners occupy a space that sits between life and death. Prisoners said that they avoided talking about the loss of hope in life in the PreCQK and PreCQW, "it can bring back bad memories, pain and hurt, it can remind us of a troublesome time, it can be upsetting, I don't want to be reminded of death, I don't see death as part of life, I am scared of it and it makes me feel uncomfortable and can perhaps bring back unwanted memories and the whole stigma of it, although it is part of life."

Many prisoners felt that "I just wanted to be alone (LWL K), and "wanting my own space" (LWL W). In reference to the film *The Mission* they suggested the perpetrating brother was "wanting to be left alone to think about what he has done" (LWL W). Sometimes hours are spent alone in a cell, but there is an over connectedness at the same time with

others confined in a small space. The aloneness of separation from loved ones is balanced by their 'voices' through the phone or letter which hold the hope.

The other option is to retreat into one's self, absorbing the trauma and isolation in order to survive. A participant described it thus

> I have a big family and they are all good and they were all there, even though they are people you love you still feel isolated. When people try to console you, you push them away with your behaviour because you can't handle it. (Prisoner K)

The absence of life outside makes one lose track of life events. It inevitably intensifies the feelings of being alone

> I was only thinking the other day it's amazing how just even like a year into, even six months being in prison, you forget what you have got on the out. It's amazing how you can live twenty years on the outside and take it for granted but you take it away for six months you soon forget what is on the outside. It's quite scary, how quickly you can forget it. (Prisoner K)

With regard to seeing the body of the deceased loved one, a participant said:

> The importance [for] some people [who] find it helpful to see a body to be able to physically touch it and say goodbye, others say

> actually I don't want that I want to remember the good memories of them looking well or happy. (Prisoner W)

Often prisoners are left with not knowing where the burial site is or if the ashes have been interred or cremated. Questioning does not cease and proof of death can turn to "disbelief, denial and anxiety" (LWL K). Some embraced death as part of life, "I now look at death as inevitable, we all die at some point, it is sad but that is the way it is... Make the most of the life you have got." (LWL K)

The prisoner narratives record diverse convictions about what remains of a person after physical death: "The soul has gone to heaven and their body is a shell" (LWL W), "we come from the dust and to the dust you return" (LWL W) and "the spirit of them is in the urn" (LWLW). In order to feel enfranchised towards the departed even at a magnified distance one prisoner envisaged the soul of his dead father as living inside him whilst he served his sentence. This conversation between facilitator and participant confirms this

> "...it's in your mind and you've got the memories and you are not fussed about a physical place in a way.
>
> No, because my father has moved on yeah.
>
> Because he has moved on in you? (Facilitator)
>
> Yeah, that's it. (Prisoner W)

The prisoner was unable to articulate his thoughts without the help of the facilitator who offered the idea of his father "moving on in you" through memories which actively enfranchise.

One prisoner summed up his feelings of being hopeless and lost: "I've lost them, I don't think I will ever get that back you know" (LWL W). Losses of attachment figures often cause the deepest losses. The fear of an eternal separation causes the most profound trauma. Moltmann says

> We have to be 'released' from our anxiety...he has endured the fear of being forsaken by God - the fear of separation...By recognizing our anxiety in his, and by seeing it be abolished in his, we experience that 'blessed' anxiety which kindles an unconquerable hope. To be 'released' from fear means standing up to fear, resisting it. It means walking freely through the midst of fear, sustained by hope, because nothing 'in the whole creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Moltmann 1980, p.54).

Ambivalence towards the absence of a loved one was also a response that I encountered as an internal response to 'imprisoned grief'

> I find it easier in here, by not being surrounded by family. Having constant reminders that all you've got really is a photo or possibly a phone call, I struggle with Mother's Day, birthdays I find quite hard, Christmas I'm not too bad...being in here you can go without

> noticing it you know, I don't know whether it's a good thing or a bad thing. (Prisoner W)

Ambivalence was not a response to the question in the PreCQW, "what can be positive about loss?" Most left this answer blank or responded with the word "nothing". Having completed the course the POCQW assessed its impact by asking if the participants were now able to examine their feelings towards the deceased. Participants wrote: "having the chance to know the person and feeling happy because you have; celebrating their memory and life; the realisation of the good things that had happened before the loss and how that could help you through the bad times and realising how much you loved the person that had passed away and how much they made you feel proud to be related or to have known them."

Anticipation and hopefulness were treated very warily by the course participants. They were to be feared in case there was disappointment in self and those around. Feelings of despondency were pervasive. If this was the status quo then the individual was defended against disappointment.

I gleaned more evidence of this in the informal interviews I had with remaining prisoners from the project a year after the support group had ended. The conversations recorded the fact that the group process had helped to keep hope alive in the face of imprisoning grief. One research participant was looking forward to his imminent release and talked of

the importance of a stable and loving relationship that would contain him enough to end his life of crime. His faith and trust in God as a Father figure, who was absent in childhood, complemented the fact that he wanted to be able to show his mother that this would be possible for him. He had continued to read and pray the psalms. Moltmann says: "Faith in the resurrection becomes faith that rises up, wherever it transforms psychological and social systems; so that instead of being orientated on death, they are orientated on life" (Moltmann 1974, p. 294).

Moltmann speaking of his own experiences as a Prisoner of War sheds further light

> I became fascinated with the Psalms ...These psalms gave me the words for my own suffering. They opened my eyes to the God who is with those 'that are of a broken heart'...This experience of not sinking into the abyss but of being held up from afar was the beginning of a clear hope, without which it is impossible to live at all (Moltmann 1980, p.8).

Another prisoner had broken up with his long term girlfriend. He reflected on the fact that she would be better off without waiting for him to be released. He put her needs before his own due to the length of his sentence. He missed being able to speak openly about this loss at the group meetings.

The phrase 'imprisoned grief' was responded to in several different ways by prisoners. They used the following words to describe it: shame, feeling locked inside, worthless, pained and hurt, self-absorbed, isolated, hopeless, lost and feeling ambiguous to the deceased. This analysis gives a rare glimpse of the feelings and emotions of the participants in response to the loss of freedom, anticipatory grief, loss due to bereavement and loss as a factor in criminal behaviour and loss due to homicide.

Institutional responses to imprisoned grief

Imprisonment magnifies a conventional process of grieving. Grief and loss experienced prior to and during imprisonment became magnified on top of the loss of freedom. One participant said, "I feel that I have got very, very low self-esteem and it is bad enough knowing what has happened to me with my bereavement but then here it just makes you feel even worse" (KFG). This is further amplified for life sentence prisoners who have the added guilt of causing a death. All participants had experienced these feelings. Prison staff felt very strongly that this should be the case for prisoners. Guilt was a topic of conversation in nearly every course session: whether the guilt of their crime (especially if a homicide) - "we've all done something, or been found guilty of something"- or the guilt of not being around for their family at the time of a family bereavement - "if it's your 24/7 what you think is that you feel guilty." Feeling guilty was how the institution made them feel.

Participants recorded in their PreCQW and PreCQK that not only was death seen as a "taboo subject, nobody wants to die and it is a morbid subject", but that the secondary loss of freedom represented by the containment in the prison which a life sentence has on individuals affected everything. The life sentence is not just about freedom being taken away but living with the wrong action which aggravates everything for the rest of one's life. It seems common-sense that murder and manslaughter as a crime and the life sentence imposed 'magnify' the experience of 'imprisoned grief.'

Denial of death can increase the burden of bereavement and in the same way magnify 'imprisoned grief'. Doka warns that "in fostering death denial as a cultural template for policy formulation" (Doka 2002, p. 352) the prison as an institution could be tempted to continue to leave the severity of it unacknowledged, unresolved and festering, further magnifying the situation for prisoners serving long sentences. In not allowing prisoners to attend to the dying needs of some relatives or go to funerals a denial could be seen as an institutional response to 'imprisoned grief'.

As a result the lack of autonomy over decision making enlarged the sense of disenfranchisement and was imposed by prison staff to run an effective regime. Participants had to accept that they had no control over how far away from home they might be held, or whether their family and friends would support them through the sentence and - in the long

term - no control over their future life plans. For some of those serving long or life sentences there was also the risk of dying in prison and the need to face their mortality. Some even said that their own death would be the only way to allay the intensification of their feelings and emotions of sorrow. One prisoner commented "I've got a horrible strange place to be" (LWL W). Poor communication within the prison environment often led to paranoia, whereby prisoners would feel "let down", cut off and not being able to live with my family at their time of need" (POCQW). This would often be perceived as a lack of humane containment, rather than a restriction which came about because of their individual responsibility of poor behaviour.

In addition, when they did have family visits within the prison, bereavement was not what people wanted to talk about as Visits was seen as the wrong place to show emotion: "when you have a visitor they don't like to mention it" (LWL W), amplifying their lack of autonomy. Having a prison visit could feel constricting and prisoners often commented that their families could not comprehend how the prison environment contributed to this magnification. Some had a deeply unsympathetic attitude to their loved one's loss of freedom, because it was of their own making. It is not unusual for prisoners' families not to want the prisoner to attend a funeral thinking that it 'magnifies' the shame that a custodial sentence brings on a family. Prisoners see attending a funeral as a right and when denied this opportunity not just by prison authorities but also family there can be a large emotional

response: “Yes, I’ve got the frustration, anger, self-pity for sure and not coping” and others, “I think the anger only occurs as well when it’s sudden.” (LWL W)

John Reynolds describes disenfranchisement by an institution as an act of oppression, and sees grief as an “inalienable right” (Reynolds 2002, p. 355). The effect on the prisoners of the disenfranchising act by family or prison authorities led to the magnification of the loss experience entrenching prisoners in ‘imprisoned grief.’ One response from a participant summed up the response from the prison as a place that could not contain the magnified pain of loss: “you don’t really feel like smiling and put on a brave face. You push yourself into work and try to keep busy and try to blank out what you are really feeling, or bottling it up or by using drugs or alcohol” (LWL K) and “the course has made me realise that I can start to live with my loss and start to move on and be a man again” (LWLWES). It was rather a crutch that absorbed the pain or the course as part of the prison’s response that could make a difference.

Others were determined that “they would never let prison become a way of life” (LWLWFUI), so as to avoid being “institutionalised.” Insistently positive about the future, participants conceived prison as a release from other ills such as bankruptcy, their local reputation and a chance to save money by working and benefiting from education. Some even celebrated prison as a freeing place from an abusive father or to have time to get over a broken relationship with a girlfriend. They

wanted prison to hold them, rather than be a place where grief was magnified.

Prisoners in Open conditions were allowed breaks to see how they would cope without the containment of prison life. This was the most obvious difference in response to 'imprisoned grief' between Open and closed conditions. Obviously though, these breaks were to assess the risk of re-offending rather than to calculate how prisoners coped emotionally. Often the prison had become the emotional attachment figure and without it personal losses were experienced in a more acute way. One long term prisoner described the first time after his girlfriend had died that he was out on home leave on the days which they would have normally celebrated their birthdays together: "I was completely devastated that she was no longer there... it was absolutely shocking." (LWL K) He had just discovered that her son, who was looking after her ashes, had decided with his mother before she died that they should be scattered in the Canary Islands, where they had enjoyed many holidays together. The restrictions on his licence after his prison sentence had finished made it impossible for him to join in this act, putting the grieving process deeper into a state of limbo: "I haven't got any property of my own or any of her belongings to go back to." (LWL K)

This sense of hopelessness was also anticipated before release: "I just know that it is going to be terrible when I get out because I have had to put everything on hold" (LWL K). The predictable aspect of despair

building up to release is yet another aspect of 'imprisoned grief' leading to a loss of hope in life beyond prison. This is not addressed by the prison. The facilitator had a role in keeping hope alive when it was not possible for individual research participants to do so. After the course was finished the facilitators all felt that a shift of mind-set still needed to take place amongst participants and staff to address this effectively.

Another institutional and environment response to loss was to silence its expression. This happened when decisions were taken on a prisoner's behalf and in particular when a loved one was seriously ill or died, either by the Prison Service or by family members. The prisoner's needs and wishes were often lost in the process. Decisions needed to be made about how much and how often information was transferred between the prisoner and their relatives and by whom. The time taken over verification of the information and a risk assessment only heightened the prisoner's anxiety.

Prisoners were extremely vocal in conversation with chaplains about the fact that nothing remained private and that decision making was done without them. For example, a prisoner was told in the same week that his uncle and then his business partner had died: "I felt that their ears were just closed. There was no help whatsoever, and my uncle was like a father figure to me" (LWL K). Being 'silenced' led to feelings of invisibility, almost as a forced denial of death and grief: "You get

worried because you get all anxious about whatever you are feeling; you just think it's you" (LWL W).

Time and again what manifested itself was that prisoners wanted to preserve themselves from further hurt and preferred to "keep things bottled up", as there was "the risk of upsetting others" (LWL K). Kuhn says "a cycle of silence is established when there is an unusual loss" (Kuhn 2002, p. 123). Here the unusual nature of the participants' losses were distinguished by their disenfranchised and self-disenfranchised situation, their complex grieving patterns, the loss of freedom and incarcerating element of not being 'heard', which are all contributing factors in 'imprisoned grief.'

The prison is not an environment which is easily adapted as a place for healing. However attempts have been made to bring families closer together so that both parties can understand what it feels like for the other to live in these separate worlds. At the time of my research at HMP Kirkham the Grassroots Family Project was in operation. All day family days were held monthly and an assigned worker helped prisoners and their families during this time of separation. At HMP Whitemoor enfranchising work could be begun in a special visits room away from the rest of the daily visiting, facilitated by the chaplaincy team yet under close supervision from officers. These are two examples of an institutional response to combat 'imprisoned grief'.

Imprisonment exacerbates fragile family relationships which can be further compounded by a family bereavement or tragedy. There is a significant double sense of loss when the living are unable to support those 'imprisoned 'in their grief because relationships are broken or have never existed. The following is an example of that between a prisoner and his son.

> I've been talking to my eldest because now he is fourteen. He was eight when his mum died so he was too young and he didn't have a clue.
>
> Really actually that will be a release won't it. (Facilitator)
>
> That's what I think, you know I can't kid myself, but I'm looking forward to it. (LWLSG)

There is a mutual brokenness between this father and his children. His desire to heal it is his expression of what Linda Goldman terms "re-establishing their assumptive world" (Goldman 2002, p. 201). She states

> Kindness, protection, and a loving sense of self can be re-established in their assumptive world by recognizing the signs of traumatized grieving children; allowing understanding and expression of feelings, thoughts, and behaviours that are natural for grieving children; and creating a space of consistency, openness, and patience to allow these children to safely experience their grief process (Goldman 2002, p. 201).

The Living with Loss project exposed the distinctive aspects of 'imprisoned grief' and the participant's internal responses and the prisons external response to it. These enlarge my reading of Doka (2002) and enhance an understanding of the differences that 'imprisoned grief' reveal from disenfranchised or self-disenfranchised grief not currently reflected in the academic literature available.

The second half of this chapter highlights the spiritual practices, religious coping mechanisms and practical solutions that challenged 'imprisoned grief.'

Emerging Spiritual practices

A number of emerging collaborative and individual spiritual practices came to light during the Living with Loss project because of its practical, theological and collaborative action research approach. They both contribute to professional practice and to the academy as ways in which 'imprisoned grief' can be unlocked and transformed.

Spiritual practices were generated by participants themselves, such as reading the Psalms, praying before bed, lighting candles, keeping mementos of the deceased, saying the rosary, reflective writing through the use of a journal, writing poetry, silent reflection, prayer, meditation and producing art work. These were recorded as '"lessening the sense of isolation" (LWLSG). They resonate with Moltmann's experience as to

the importance and practice of facilitating spiritual beliefs to counter oppressive silencing and decision making in the camps.

> When people are reduced to silence, under humiliation and persecution, it is often only prayer that keeps their hope alive, so that they do not give themselves up. For praying, sighing, complaining and crying out for God are not religious gifts or performances. They are realistic expressions of the abyss into which people have fallen, or have put themselves, and which they discover in their own hearts. Wherever the cry from the depths is heard, the Spirit who 'helps us in our weakness' is present. When in our torment we ourselves fall dumb, the spirit is there too, interceding for us 'with sighs too deep for words' (NRSV Romans 8:26) (Moltmann 1992, p.76).

Faith rituals enabled participants to bring this particular sorrow out into the open as a rare expression of grief and loss. One participant had found that "up until now it had been tricky to talk about his feelings towards his victim but talking on the course had helped him come to terms with the length of his sentence" (LWL W).

The prison chaplaincy team can offer opportunities and give permission to prisoners to unlock feelings and emotions safely in order to enfranchise, liberate and transform parts of their lives which otherwise would have been left to fester. Christopher Moody says that the essence of the role of the chaplain is to have "a wilderness ministry to places

where people are cut adrift from their normal ties" (Moody 1999, p.17). He reinforces the point by suggesting that prison is a place where God makes himself known within the context of spiritual conflict and encounter.

Facilitating the unlocking of 'imprisoned grief' often remains 'hidden' too from those who work in other disciplines like psychologists, teachers and probation officers. Much of this work was carried out in the evenings and at weekends when those professionals were not present in the prison. It came to their attention most often when information from a chaplain was needed for a case conference for a prisoner on suicide watch or for a release on temporary licence. I was asked to speak at a full staff briefing about the project to combat the hidden nature of the chaplain's work in supporting 'imprisoned grief.' As a result self-referrals increased as staff spoke to prisoners about its value. Prisoners routinely asked if a chaplain would include the progress that they made on the Living with Loss course in parole reports, re-categorisation board reports and lifer board reports. As a result the Living with Loss course was commended in the recent Unannounced Visit Report by the Chief Inspector to Prisons on HMP Whitemoor (2014, pp.37-38). 'Imprisoned grief' as a phenomenon no longer remained hidden from view.

I argue that the Living with Loss project counteracted the oppressive silencing and lack of decision making by encouraging freedom of religious and spiritual expression in its optional faith rituals and

accompanying spiritual practices in which solidarity with God and fellow participants acted as a liberating factor. Participants said: "having a faith means that I am never on my own" (POCQW) and "it is my friends that have helped get me through." (LWL K) Some found time to search for meaning by themselves. Encouraging prisoners to discover the power of silent reflection is one of the chaplain's tasks. There is a sense of empowerment and a freedom of expression in silence which imprisonment cannot impoverish. One prisoner said: "God cannot be taken away from me and is always present in my life and sometimes feels more important than my family to me" (LWLW FUI).

This combination of 'doing theology' with God and others are both ways in which one can seek to understand a situation and begin what Elaine Graham refers to as the "cultivation of theologically grounded practical wisdom" (Graham 2013, p. 178).

Faith rituals as a theological wisdom of practice

As a facilitator I co-constructed ten optional faith rituals in addition to facilitating opportunities for rituals to be conducted as part of the support group on an individual basis. When the six week course was extended to nine weeks an option was included in session eight to plan this with a facilitator of one's choice and for the faith ritual to take place during session nine. This was also a private opportunity for the

participants to discuss with the facilitator their own individual learning throughout the course. During session eight participants were encouraged to identify where they felt their grief was immovable, trapped or imprisoned and how it might become unlocked through a ritual action, words, songs or symbols.

Faith rituals gave spiritual expression and meaning to their loss with the benefit of providing "…closure, it was a place where they could talk about something not mentioned on the course, it tackled the issue about how I felt about my faith, a realisation that material possessions were not important, but family members were, put issues to bed that had been raised on the course, provided a feeling of release and contentment and gave an opportunity to explore and maybe realise why and how loss had affected me" (POCQW and POCQK).

Wider theoretical perspectives shed light on these ritual experiences. Anthropologists like Turner (1969) define ritual as an event that "makes change" and "moves" participants, emotionally, ideologically and structurally. This contrasts with the views of Van Gennep (1960) who sees ritual as a ceremony that merely "marks" a change which has been effected elsewhere. In this research, ritual can be described as something which happened after a series of events or at the same time as significant events happen outside the prison, which not only moved an individual, but enabled them to mark a transition in their life and exert autonomy over a situation even at a distance.

There are numerous links between ritual theory and practical theology. Both are concerned with the dynamics of practice and have an emphasis on performance. Ritual is often employed by practical theologians concerned with liturgy, pastoral care and counselling. Ritualizing is a fundamental and pervasive human activity and although understood in depth with regard to death, requires a contextual interpretation which 'imprisoned grief' provides seeing it as a theological wisdom of practice, amongst a disenfranchised community.

Rituals were co-constructed eliciting the spiritual and cultural needs of the prisoners. Doka says: "[A]lternative rituals can provide opportunities for mourners to transcend time and space and to express their own relationship, affirm an aspect of the deceased's identity or to meet their own spiritual or cultural needs" (Doka 2002, p. 141). This was particularly the case when faith rituals acted as a memorial service for the deceased which could communicate in a way that no conversation could. For one participant the ritual was co-designed to imagine a celebration of the healing of his family relationships. Using ritual was the only possible way of touching the depths of emotions in play. The ritual engaged with a reality beyond immediate apprehension and which could only be expressed symbolically. As Nathan Kollar says: "The term *symbol* is derived from the Greek, *symbolon, symballein.* The verb literally means 'to throw together'...Through symbols those engaged in ritual express and enforce togetherness" (Kollar 1989, p.272).

This Christian ritual was led by the prisoner who wanted to learn more about family patterns from a scriptural perspective. The time and space in session nine gave him the opportunity to talk, pray and read the passages of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. He identified with Jesus' brokenness on the cross, signifying his abandonment by his family and at the same time showed the way in which Jesus directed his friend John to take care of his mother (John 19:26-27 NRSV). This was a significant story for this participant as he wanted to be assured in his own mind that his estranged mother was being taken care of in his absence as a result of his father's death. His guilt at the failed mother-son relationship had previously stopped him conceiving this possibility.

The parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32 NRSV), and Rembrandt's painting of the scene (1668-69) where the father is a symbol of a welcoming and loving God who never retreats and forgives despite the wrongdoings of the younger son became the focus for the second half of the ritual. In that painting the fact that although the light in the picture is centred on the father's welcome of the younger son, the elder brother has the same light shed on his face, making it clear that he too is called to the light, despite resenting his father's actions towards his brother, struck home very powerfully. In the ritual the prisoner lit a candle not only for his deceased father but also for himself to mark the significance of this awakening.

It was also a very obvious example of co-construction, since my own theological input had been heavily influenced by my reading of Henri Nouwen's, *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (1994). I reminded this participant that this painting was painted in the latter part of Rembrandt's life, after he had lost two sons, two daughters and two wives, reputation and livelihood. It represented the profoundest time of loneliness in his life. The ritual was a means of envisaging the possibility of inner healing and enfranchisement. This pointed the way to hope beyond imprisonment.

Kollar comments

> [R]itual has the ability to re-invoke past emotion, to bind the individual to his or her own past experience, and to bring the members of the group together in a shared experience. A ritual, though essentially repetitious, is able to express and constructively channel the reactions of the celebrants (Kollar 1989, p. 273).

I facilitated another ritual where a participant described emotional deprivation in his early childhood due to his father's absence. He had never seen his father as far as he could remember. He described his criminal behaviour as a petty adolescent as a way to get his mother's attention. She adored her son as a child, yet he had abused her hospitality as an adolescent, stealing from her and dealing in drugs from her home. He said he missed the imagined disciplining impact that his father could have had on his life and wondered if his imprisonment

would not have happened if he had had a protective and authoritative figure around. In grieving these relationships, the presenting anxiety was his own lost opportunity to be a father.

His faith ritual took the form of a penitential service, where he asked for forgiveness from God for his actions towards his mother. His self-described 'penance' was to earn his parole so that he could build the relationship back up with her. Our co-authoring of this ritual seems to accord perfectly with what Kelly proposes as "doing theology" (Kelly 2008 p. 125). This made our interaction spiritually and theologically distinctive – all other contact with professionals would focus on avoiding recidivism.

Another ritual focused on saying the rosary as an autonomous expression of his faith. The prisoner's motivations for baptism were as a way in which he could show his family, himself and God his desire to turn away from his old life of drink, drugs and violence. The ritual gave a space for him to understand baptism as a "making a clean start" (LWL W). The sacramental use of baptism had the potential for enfranchisement as he became a member of God's worldwide family. As Graham says the theological wisdom of practice had been disclosed in a spiritual conversational manner informed by the Christian tradition (Graham 2013, p. 178).

Another prisoner asked me to conduct his ritual for him in its entirety because he was so immersed in shame, anger and hatred towards

himself. Before the ritual began he told me which Christian prayers he retained from his childhood that could bring him comfort now. We simply said the Hail Mary and the Lord's Prayer together and he kissed the small crucifix. His silence was self-imposed and there was sense that matters were left unresolved, yet the prayers were a comfort from the past. The silence captured his 'imprisoned grief.'

Another prisoner brought a picture of his mother, who had died just before he came to prison. Her photograph was the focus for the ritual. He wanted to read Psalm 91 (NRSV) since this had been read at her funeral. This psalm assured him of his mother's protection in heaven and his own protection during his sentence. These two expressions of spiritual identity exposed deep beliefs about his understanding of God as one who cares despite his situation.

Another participant chose to use the faith ritual as an act of penitence for his crime. He had been in denial of his manslaughter of his father until a few months before joining the project. Experiencing mourning for the first time during the course was the spur to him writing a letter to his father in which he detailed how he saw their relationship break down, apologising for stealing money from his father when he was in hospital and also saying that the fight they had (which caused his death) was an accident. He requested his father's forgiveness. By his own admission he had not been able to process any emotions and feelings of grief connected to the death of his father. He had obviously not attended his

father's funeral. At the end of our time together he burnt the letter, as a way of finally being able to say goodbye to his father.

These rituals demonstrated an opportunity for 'imprisoned' emotions to be expressed and released in a spiritual, sometimes religious, contained and boundaried framework, without other disenfranchised grievers being present. They are an authentic encounter between persons and the transcendent. The faith rituals provided a symbolic way to live with the pain of loss as part of the human life cycle. Kollar says that "knowing our rituals is knowing ourselves - and that is always the beginning of wisdom" (Kollar 1989, p. 284).

Rituals enabled participants to attribute and reconstruct meaning in their lives which is part of the "central process of grieving" (Neimeyer, 1998, p. 99). Participants found that their rituals became part of a respectful recognition of this aspect of the mourner's experience, often denied or disallowed in prison. Robert Neimeyer describes ritual as allowing "bereaved people to revisit sustaining systems of belief and practices that have been challenged by the loss and reorient themselves to a transformed self and world" (Neimeyer 2002, p. 102). This was a critical role for the prison chaplain and chaplaincy volunteers to play during the Living with Loss project when re-orientating a transformed self-needed to be done in front of other peers due to the length of incarceration.

Having a recognized structure in a post-death ritual enabled prisoners to affirm a relationship with the deceased by an imaginative symbolic act even when that relationship was broken in some way. Significant moments in their relationships with the deceased played a very important part in this process. Absorbing the death, and finding a space to leave take of the deceased was often symbolised through a lighted candle which remained lit at the end of the ritual. The structure gave an opportunity for regeneration, identification, communal awareness, awareness of communal values and a suitable outlet for identification, substitution and guilt. (Kollar 1989, p.276). With others who mourned in similar ways, the research participants became members of a new community living without the deceased. The emotional release of giving value to the deceased in this way was powerful.

Participants said that the rituals had provided, "an opportunity for memory to be shared, personalisation, respect for my faith, and a realisation about others' faith was important and helped to keep my resolve strong, an opportunity not to forget the deceased and how not to make the same mistakes again" (POCQW). These responses suggest that the goals of a funeral ritual in addressing social, psychological and spiritual needs were addressed. The process of creating and undertaking the rituals also harnessed a "re-discovering of my identity" (LWL W) of the participant when not acting in a criminal way. The imprisoned griever himself was acknowledged rather than being left to feel

alienated and merely part of what Williams calls the "mass identity" (Williams (1992, p. 93) of the custodial prisoner.

Religious coping

The Living with Loss project was established on the basis of no religious commitment. However, the project took place in the chaplaincy centres in both prisons and was run by people of faith. Those who wanted to explore the religious side of their life were affirmed and accepted. Participants themselves said that inadvertently discussing religious aspects of their grief and how their faith helped them "to think positively before negatively about death." Other comments included "[it] showed how other faiths deal with death and to see that death is still a taboo subject in my faith community even though it might not be in others." (LWL W and LWL K)

Similar feelings were expressed in the POCQW. Amongst them were: "when I pray I am communicating with a loved one, in Buddhism I believe in re-incarnation and I know that the deceased has gone to another place, faith is my best friend in tough times and helps me in being strong, faith stands with me and encourages me, my faith ritual helped me release my emotions and I was able to let go, and I always ask God to look after my family." Belief in God eased and challenged the sense of loneliness experienced in 'imprisoned grief.' Participants found solidarity through practising their faith.

An example of this was a prisoner at HMP Kirkham who had become both mother and father to his children following the death of his wife. He used his imprisonment to reflect on being two parents in one. The role of the chaplain was to listen and engage with this part of himself in order to help lift his self-esteem before release. It offered him the opportunity to forgive himself for his failings during single parenthood, to seek peace for himself and as an older prisoner to encourage others not to make the same mistakes as himself. He recognised that the ritual was not a one-off moment, but represented the sustenance needed on his journey of faith.

In her study of the transformation of criminal lives, Joanne Day sees religious coping as offering "a stress-buffering role by assisting coping with significant negative life events and act as a significant resilience factor for many people" (Day (2012, p. 196). She suggests that faith taught participants in her field-work forgiveness, love, perseverance, patience and persistence. The dangers of exploitation of religious experiences in these circumstances were also highlighted. Liebling et al. comment

> There was a fine threshold between the Muslim faith community as a support network (´the brotherhood´) and another group also comprising Muslim prisoners, but operating more like a gang. The latter group were seen as embodying the operating principles of outside gangs and now shaping parts of the Muslim community inside: this group provided deep networks and protective features.

> The group was easy to enter but difficult to exit; the 'players' exerted pressure on non-members to join the group to increase its numbers and therefore its power (Liebling et al. 2011, p.53).

Day's (2012) findings provide a mixed picture of how helpful an ongoing faith is in the transformation of the participants in her study upon release. Neither Day (2012) nor Liebling et al. (2011) set out initially to measure how practising one's faith is a support during and after imprisonment and neither of them mention directly, still less attempt to assess, the positive significance of solidarity in the healing process of living in a community of profound loss and with cumulative loss experiences behind them. This in itself would be a difficult qualitative challenge, however the prisoner narratives recorded in the Living with loss project record that for some having a faith was a fundamental part of how they lived within an environment of loss and with loss experiences.

There was a careful balance to be struck within the prisoner population at Whitemoor as picked up by Liebling et al.

> There were some intimidating 'heavy players' among the Muslim population, who were orchestrating prison power dynamics rather than propagating or following the faith. Many physically powerful prisoners 're-established their outside identities' as

> leaders in the prison and used their (newly acquired) faith status as a tool for establishing influence.
>
> Non-Muslim prisoners described wearing underpants in the showers on some spurs (out of 'respect' and fear) and some Muslim prisoners described a form of intimidation exerted ('they probably do feel shamed') relating to cooking (especially frying bacon) in the kitchens.
>
> Conflict and tension existed between and within faith groups (Liebling et al. 2011, p.3).

Establishing an explicitly non-faith basis for being part of the Living with Loss project in Whitemoor therefore had positive benefit as it was not concerned with the divisions that continued to exist within the prisoner population, but focussed rather on shared experiences of loss and trauma. The Living with Loss project was built up as a united disenfranchised community where solidarity, empathy, active discussion and support for one another were encouraged to overcome separation. This was to overcome one of the most disenfranchising aspects of loss which Kuhn describes, "loss may mean separation not only from the lost object but also from the community that is affected by the loss" (Kuhn 2000, p. 124). The courses countered 'being silenced' by empowering participants to come up with ways through the medium of film, biography, music and literature which they would find spiritually and practically supportive. Lynch says

> For practitioners working with people whose world view does not include an authoritative tradition, referring to the sacred texts may in itself be confusing. Some of these practitioners have tapped into the skills of cultural interpretation possessed by their clients and used cultural resources such as film, music, novels to spark meaning and purpose (Lynch 2005, p. 84).

There was positive feedback in the POCQK and POCQW from prisoners in the six week Living with Loss courses about this element of course delivery and this encouraged the facilitators to increase the numbers of film clips shown in the nine week course and to watch and discuss parts of films in the support group. In response to watching *Mrs Brown*, one participant recorded that Queen Victoria had "become bitter, reclusive, angry, irresponsible, withdrawn, blanking things out and wrapped up in one's own grief just like me."(LWL W)

Seeing an expression of a range of emotions in response to loss on film helped prisoners to connect to their own situations. The psychotherapist Bernie Wooders says

> Movie therapy helps us to identify complex emotions and frees us from them. It does this by giving them expression in a way that reduces their emotional charge and produces more clarity. ...Spiritually it can help us witness our egoic processes from another level of consciousness. It can help us develop a place of self-awareness from which we can witness our thoughts and

> feelings without being sucked in and contaminated by them (Wooders 2008, p. 219).

Faith rituals acted as transitional milestones in the prisoner's journey and sometimes as a springboard for a lasting religious coping strategy, which countered some aspects of 'imprisoned grief' such as being alone and the need for forgiveness to counter shame. Spiritual and religious coping often accompanied practical coping strategies.

Practical Coping Strategies and Responses to Imprisoned Grief

Small practical actions and shared coping strategies acted as a launch pad to cope with 'imprisoned grief'. These ranged from having copies of the orders of service for funerals that prisoners could not attend sent in and collecting photos of the deceased to connect with what had happened at a distance. Provision was made for prayer and sympathy cards to be distributed to send out to family members. Harner, Hentz and Evangelista recalled one prisoner they interviewed who "...had a picture of her mother taped to her uniform...Placing the picture of her mother and the Mass card on her uniform was her way of remembering her mother and showing her respect for her life" (Harner, Hentz and Evangelista 2010 pp. 454-55)

There were mixed reactions to such physical reminders of past members of prisoners' families amongst participants of the Living with Loss groups. Cherished memories did lessen the sense of isolation. Some

described them as “treasure”, others as providing a “sort of fake closure in prison” (LWL W). Although the photo brought home the reality of the death of a loved one, not taking part in the funeral rituals often led to the idea of fake closure. This idea of being “fake” resonated with Liebling et al. who comment

> This notion of being fake and holding oneself back, were recurring themes in conversations about identity in prison. Prisoners talked about not acting on what they thought, but suppressing it or displaying a somewhat ‘dimmed version ‘ of themselves...As a result of being as reserved as possible, prisoners lost touch with their identities, or with the ‘higher aspects of themselves’ they often wanted to develop. The feeling of not knowing themselves anymore was disturbing and constituted one of the deep pains of imprisonment (Liebling et al. 2011, p. 26).

Further thought was given to how to alleviate ‘imprisoned grief’ by all parties. From the participants’ point of view hearing other people’s stories reduced the sense of silence and isolation and increased empathy. One participant reflected, “You’re doing nothing but feeling a bit sorry for yourself and when you hear that someone else is going through the same thing you realise it’s just a process and not just you, you know” (LWL W). The value that prisoners placed on sharing experiences and feelings with others was striking. The support group rapidly focused on

meeting the existing (and developing) practical needs of prisoners who continued to find living in a loss environment a huge life challenge.

Practical changes to the Living with Loss curriculum came directly from the discussions at the support group meetings and included beginning the nine week course with a life map exercise, plotting personal experiences of grief and loss prior to and during imprisonment. The exercise also acted as an ice-breaker during session one, giving permission for individuals to see the connections between their own situation and what was covered in the course curriculum. It was also used as a practical participative tool giving group members autonomy to think about their own particular situations and life history from the start.

The chaplaincy offered a safe, confidential and containing environment within the prison. A sense of solidarity was of the highest importance to the participants. One prisoner described it, "Confidentiality, who can I talk to? Friends have got me through. Good idea to be with the ones who are in a similar situation, solidarity within the group, chatting and listening to other people's stories has helped" (LWL SG) and another as "I don't let death overshadow what I've done in life" (LWL SG).

Again

> I think it is just important to be with people who have been in a similar situation as you, being with each other is very important,

sharing with each other is very important, I never really got going with the three sessions of counselling that I had, something ongoing and in more depth would be very helpful to me. (Prisoner K)

What do you want to get from the group? (Facilitator)

Am I allowed to speak openly? (Prisoner K)

Yes. (Facilitator)

Dealing with the unhappiness that you feel it's difficult for people to understand how you are feeling, so solidarity. You feel more relaxed because everyone has been through it. It gives you a chance to gauge yourself, test yourself how far you can come through it; it feels like this is the place to be in. Getting rid of inhibitions. (Prisoner K)

One participant prized the compassion of staff.

Bedford, my last jail...The officers that we had there were older. They would come in your cell, they would have a cup of tea with you or cup of coffee and smoke with you, talk about sport and talk about whatever, but they would say to you, you know, there but for the Grace of God go I, because I could so easily be in your shoes. And it's the human element, that's all it's about (Prisoner W).

This echoes some of the spirit of places that Liebling et al. found at HMP Whitemoor

> Prisoners found places where mutual cooperation, as well as hope, care, inspiration and motivation were more present and acceptable, than they seemed to be on the landings. These places were away from the wings, literally situated 'at ground level' in the workshop area. Or they were in education, the Chapel, or the gym (Liebling et al. 2011, p. 31).

Prisoners often responded tearfully to waiting for news from home or news about their future. Tears represented a releasing and letting go of some of their feelings of disappointment within themselves and in others.

> I don't want to ever let go, not really silly stages where you cry and cry and you can't cry anymore, it's like you've cried all your tears out and it hurts and you can't just cry anymore it like, also you seem to stop crying, you cry every now and then, you don't have that continuous bawling, that's how I felt you know, and then you sort of progress. (Prisoner W).

The informal interviews that I conducted a year after the support group had ended at HMP Whitemoor provide further examples of practical help and ideas that the course had given to participants in enfranchising themselves. One had been able to meet his children to explain the death

of his mother from his perspective now they were older. He wanted to find a way before his release of being able to explain himself to them, rather than anyone else, what life was like when she was alive and how she died. He had asked me to find resources which addressed how the death of a parent in early childhood affected stages of development and what charitable help they could access now and on his release. This practical coping was accompanied by a strong protective force of faith.

> Having faith in prison is like having a family around you. When the door is locked at night, it is all I have to rely on. It is the only thing that I can trust. What I have been able to do since I last saw you, was to have a private family visit, organised by the chaplaincy team, to talk to the children about how their mum died. They are that little bit older now. Previously, I had been only able to speak to them about the fact that she had gone to heaven, now I am able to confide in them, how she died, what she died from and how this affected me. This was a very special day, that I had looked forward to although, I knew it would be difficult for me, but I went through with it. (LWLW FUI)

This visit had been a turning point in his life sentence. I believe that this example demonstrates well how spiritual, pastoral and practical care can be transformative during a life sentence.

I recorded that the prisoner who had lost three of his family members during his crime was learning to forgive himself by allowing his wider

family to visit him more often, having previously denied them the opportunity because of his shame at the crime. Enfranchising him back into his wider family gave him a greater measure of self-respect and improved his daily quality of life. Another research participant was looking forward to his imminent release and talked of the importance of a stable and loving relationship that would contain him enough to end his life of crime. His faith and trust in God as a Father figure, who was absent in childhood, complemented the fact that he wanted to be able to show his mother that this would be possible for him. He had continued to read and pray the psalms as he focussed on the Psalmist's relationship with God, often one where he could express the anguish of his emotions and lament the state of his life.

Another prisoner had broken up with his long term girlfriend. He reflected on the fact that she would be better off without waiting for him to be released. He put her needs before his own due to the length of his sentence. He missed being able to speak openly about this loss at the group meetings. Prisoners supported one another at times of grief and loss via the Listeners scheme (Samaritans inside) and the use of Insiders (existing prisoners who help new prisoners to find their way around). Opportunities were also created for participants to support themselves in their grief through the literature from CRUSE and Child Bereavement charities, biographies, self-help books, journals and diaries, CDs and DVDs which could be borrowed from the chaplaincy.

Prisoners were intensely curious as to why volunteers wanted to come to a prison and to discuss their experience as a practical expression of helping other to come to terms with grief and loss. Like chaplains to some degree, they did not represent the prison establishment, a particular denomination or faith standpoint, but offered a distinct perspective and life experience. John Abraham notes

> Clergy too have the advantage of being able to involve themselves with, and assist, disenfranchised grievers as they struggle to find meaning and sense in their losses and in their lives. For after all the job of religion is to interpret life - to interpret the world. It seems to me that part of the task of the clergy is to assist people in asking the right questions along their life's spiritual pilgrimage (Abraham 1989, pp. 250-51).

I found an instructive parallel here between the Living with Loss project and Moltmann's experience. Meeting some Dutch students from outside of his Prisoner of War camp, Moltmann is recorded by Muller-Fahrenholz as saying at a service in London in 1995 that

> I was able to breathe again, felt like a human being once more, and returned cheerfully to the camp behind the barbed wire. The question of how long the captivity was going to last no longer bothered me.

> These students told us that Christ was the bridge on which they could cross to us and that without Christ they would not be talking to us at all...We too could step on this bridge which Christ had built from them to us, and could confess their guilt of our people and ask for reconciliation. At the end we all embraced. For me *this was an hour of liberation* (Muller-Fahrenholz 2000, pp. 18, 24-25)

Prisoners who attended the nine week course practically gained a sense of what could come from having a more positive approach to grief and loss to feel that "all was not lost"(LWL K). They had an extra three sessions which focussed on specific types of loss and coping strategies. This was reflected in the POCQW comments on the question "What is positive about loss for you?" They responded:

> You will appreciate what you lose when gained back, it can make you stronger, mentally and physically and sometimes better things or situations come through loss, it can mean the end of pain and trauma, realising how much you loved and liked the person who has passed away and how much they made you proud to be related or know them, a new start, it can be a chance to move on and a chance to re-evaluate yourself and others, no pain and suffering, life can be easier and a realisation of the good things before the loss and how that may help you through bad times.

Letting go was hotly debated as a way of practically coping with loss whilst in prison. Some prisoners moved away from the pain - "a symbolic weight was lifted off one's shoulders." (LWL K) Others were unable to see a way forward, "I don't think you ever let go, completely. In my case I can't imagine ever saying I'm OK now I can let go – I can't imagine that but there is ways of dealing with it and accepting it maybe. I don't think you can completely let go" (LWLK) and "I don't think anybody, I'll be honest with you now – I don't think anybody consciously lets go" (LWLW).

In speaking about their attitudes towards grief and loss participants actively and practically helped others to gain a sense of perspective on life. One participant reflected the wisdom of the older prison population

> I think inevitably from the day that we know that we are born that our life is not eternal and we know that we are going to die sooner or later. Obviously now we know that the closest people to us, our loved ones means so much to us. We are seeking, consoling within ourselves. It's hard to explain, but I think it boils down to maturity and wisdom on life itself, 'cause death its part of our human existence we know that from the day we are born. I know that we've got these feelings, but why do we feel these feelings because we know that it's part of life. (Prisoner W)

As the researcher-practitioner my work of enfranchising, liberating and transforming those with 'imprisoned grief' reflects Christopher Rowland

and Zoe Bennett's definition of doing practical theology: "much theology can often seem remote from ordinary life. By contrast, practical theology has its starting place, not in detached reflection on Scripture and tradition but the present life" (Rowland and Bennett 2006, p.188.) As a student of practical theology I particularly reflected upon the parallels between Moltmann's (2007) experience as a prisoner of war where his outward captivity impacted upon the inward imprisonment of his soul and the experience of those with 'imprisoned grief.' Moltmann(2007 p.30) suggests that when he read the Psalms that it 'was an echo from my own soul, and it called that soul to God.' I reflect on what I learnt through my research both theologically and as a practitioner by beginning with the prisoners' present day life experience of 'imprisoned grief.' This is doing practical theology.

I developed my theological understanding of the incarnation and subsequently my Christological perception of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus which underpin and root my practical theology. In the incarnation, God is always present to our humanity in the person of Jesus, despite loss, and in particular the death of those whom we love. God is present in the birth and the death of those who we love. God is also present in the hope that can be found in forgiveness of the perpetrator of death. It is this presence that provides hope for a new beginning and the liberation from suffering that grief brings. These reflections not only challenged me as a theologian but also as a prison chaplain.

Moltmann (2004, p.16) describes the mutual indwelling of God and human beings as a 'daily experiences of love' which can penetrate lived experiences of darkness and provide a 'revolutionary power of hope.' His doctrine of hope engaged my personal and professional experiences of life in the search for new beginnings following loss, in which Jesus' humanity provides life giving liberating possibilities to all those who feel hopeless, lost and imprisoned in their own worlds.

Furthermore, I developed a new dimension to my Christology which fed my chaplaincy practice. Knowing that Jesus comes to seek out even the lost, being in solidarity with all must include both perpetrators and victim of evil, with whom my everyday prison ministry brought me into contact. Moltmann (2004) understood that to be both despised and excluded, as prisoners are, is deeply wounding to a person's self-respect and can lead to despising oneself though shame and hating of self. Having an experience of this as both a soldier and a prisoner of war, he offered both a personal and theological perspective which spoke to these every day encounters.

Moltmann (2004, p.68) developed a relationship with God who respected him and brought about a new beginning in his life with a new hope, suggesting that in his Son, it is possible to 'throw open the inner spiritual prisons of self-contempt', which he had encountered as a soldier. I experienced this as it became apparent as a possibility for those with 'imprisoned grief' as they challenged themselves, their self-

perception and others opinion of them as they encountered a different spiritual, humanitarian approach and dimension from within the chaplaincy team and in the faith rituals.

The passion of Jesus for Moltmann (2004, p.69) suggests a deep solidarity for both perpetrator and victim, which speaks of God truly with humanity, where 'an active love for sufferers, become his suffering love with sufferers' and an 'unresolved self-giving to the uttermost for the God-forsaken'. He (2004, p.69) argues that 'if God goes where Jesus goes, if God himself was in Jesus, then through his passion Jesus brings the love of God to people who are as cast down and emptied as he was himself'. As a practitioner, one of the roles of the prison chaplain is to bring the love and hope in both the incarnation and the passion to those who find themselves in those dark imprisoned places through both a grief experience and through the emptiness that a life of crime can bring. This was achieved in a number of ways throughout the Living with Loss project.

Moltmann reminds us that there were two experiences which caused him to have a new hope in life in the camp,

> …the friendly encounter with those Scottish working men and their families and a Bible one day a well-meaning army chaplain came to our camp and after a brief address distributed Bibles….There was an echo from my own soul, and it called that soul to God….when I heard Jesus's death cry 'My God, my God,

> why have you forsaken me?', I felt growing within me the conviction: this is someone who understands you completely, who is with you in your cry to God and has felt the same forsakenness you are living in now. I began to understand the assailed, forsaken Christ because I knew that he understood me. The divine brother in need, the companion on the way, who goes with you through this valley of the shadow of death', the fellow sufferer who carries you, with your suffering. (Moltmann 2007, pgs.29-30)

Moltmann (2004, p.70) not only confronts the reader with a combination his own life changing experience in a prisoner of war camp but a radical Christology

> In surrendering himself to a God-forsaken death, Christ brought God to the God-forsaken. Jesus entered into his humiliation and his forsakenness by God and human beings so that he could be a brother to the forsaken, and be beside them as a friend in their time of need. Ultimately he helps them not through supernatural miracles but, by virtue of his self-giving, through his pain: through his wounds we are healed." (Isa 53:5; Matt 8:17)- healed from our sickness unto death, the God-forsakenness which is also called sin, inasmuch as sin means separation.

Here Moltmann's theology extends beyond that of the wounded healer (Nouwen 1994). He suggests a hope beyond solidarity in and with the crucified Jesus in their suffering by recognising the separation in grief. It

is not only Jesus who identifies himself with humanity's suffering, but God who has lost his only Son. In doing so God identifies himself with the crucified Jesus, as well as persecuting and persecuted humanity. The solidarity of the crucified Christ with the victims of evil is only the first step in their liberation. This understanding of Christology was one which I could apply to those who felt lost in prison, lost in grief and to those who had caused grief. This theology was accessible to all those numerous loss situations in which prisoners found themselves in and revealed an accessible and forgiving God in the person of Jesus.

Moltmann also challenged me as a practitioner to reflect upon my own experience of grief and loss and to make theological sense of it in a new and fresh way. This refreshing approach enabled me to question my own deeply held reasons for conducting this research and make new meanings from them, as I sought to do this with prisoners in and through group work, one to one encounters and in the faith rituals. This unexpected personal task also helped to transform my practice as I sought to make recommendations for future practice.

Moltmann's (2004, p.75) Christology develops further as he sees the 'resurrection as a separate and special act of God's, through which the new world of eternal life is thrown open for the victims and perpetrators of evil' and 'in the light of Christ's resurrection, the positive side of the divine compassion with the victims and perpetrators of sin becomes manifest'. This was life transforming for Moltmann (2007, p.34), 'I felt

the warmth of his great love as my senses awoke and I could love life again. I experienced this turn from the hidden face of God to his shining countenance in the nearness of Jesus, the brother in need and the leader of resurrection into true life.'

Moltmann (2004, p.162) concludes by suggesting that, '"Resurrection" always, also means transformation (1Cor.15.52), the forgiveness of sins and the putting right of what was wrong, the consoling of grief and the wiping away of the tears. That is not a transformation into a different being; it is a transformation of our own being through reconciliation.' Not only did this theology resonate with the prisoner experience of liberation but was indicative of the transformation that took place for some prisoners as part of their faith ritual. Enfranchisement, liberation and transformation of those who felt locked into their emotions encapsulating 'imprisoned grief', were resonant of the life changing and shaping experiences illuminated by Moltmann as he encountered Christ in his incarnation, death and resurrection, offering solidarity and hope to his soul.

Chapter Six

Conclusion and Implications for further research

In this thesis I have sought to demonstrate how the Living with Loss project illuminated a theological, spiritual and practical response to 'imprisoned grief.' The research question was crystallised from integrating my experiences as a prison chaplain and as a professional doctoral student in practical theology. My examination of the conceptual frameworks of disenfranchised grief (Doka, 1989, 2002) and self-disenfranchised grief (Kauffman, 2002) and the intra-psychic dimensions of these phenomena (Kauffman, 1989) only gave a partial response to what I was witnessing as a prison chaplain. Through the Living with Loss project I am able to offer a first-hand account from the prisoners' perspective of what their 'imprisoned' experiences of grief and loss entailed and to offer a response to the academic world and to other practitioners for analysis and evaluation.

From a personal perspective, I was concerned with my own practice as a researching practical theologian seeking to adopt a theologically reflective way of being. I elicited empirical data from the research participants as to the context in which they lived and to understand the meanings behind their losses: loss of freedom due to imprisonment, anticipatory grieving, bereavement during imprisonment and loss as a factor in their criminal behaviour and loss due to homicide.

Secondly, taking a Gadamerian (2003) approach to research, I adopted the model of doing PAR with PTR (Swinton and Mowat, 2006). The themes I gathered which spoke of 'imprisoned grief' found an echo in the lived experience of disenfranchisement of the German theologian Jürgen Moltmann in his profound reflections on his incarceration as a Prisoner of War in the 1940s.

> This experience of not sinking into the abyss but of being held up from afar was the beginning of a clear hope, without which it is impossible to live at all. at the same time, even this hope cut two ways; on the one hand it provided the strength to get up again after every inward or outward defeat; on the other hand it made the soul rub itself raw on the barbed wire, making it impossible to settle down in captivity or come to terms with it (Moltmann 1980, p. 8).

The juxtaposition of not sinking and being held up in a place of hope within an incarcerating environment resonates with the Living with Loss project. The data shows an articulation of profound feelings and emotions in prisoners' experiences which would not have been given voice without this research. This was facilitated through group work, faith rituals, silence and one to one pastoral care. It is clear that these can have a valuable religious meaning for prisoners who exercise a faith commitment in prison. The experience of those living with 'imprisoned grief' bears testimony to the active work of participatory action research

in its engagement with and on behalf of oppressed people. The methodology in this thesis rendered participants active, collaborative and fully involved. The engagement strove to allow participants to be as autonomous as possible under restrictive circumstances. This was enabled by contact with family members and the normalisation that volunteer facilitators brought to the project. They acted as a reconciling force between prisoners on the inside to the world of the Church on the outside.

In their testimonies, participants spoke of being disenfranchised as a result of a collapse in their assumptive worlds, sometimes resulting in spiritual crisis. The Living with Loss project shows how enfranchisement was deepened between the research participants and their families as a response to this through special visits, the Grassroots family project, release on temporary licence, Chaplaincy visits, home leave as well as in the imagination which brought comfort and strength in what Moltmann describes as a "release from anxiety" (Moltmann 1980, p. 54). For some participants there were moments of transformation, although neither the prisoners nor Moltmann used this word, preferring words like 'change' and 'revolution.'

We have observed that participants were able to change their outlook and attitude towards grief and loss, viewing some losses as a positive experience, releasing them from unfixable relationships, broken promises and letting go of some of the accompanying guilt surrounding

their imprisoned situation. Transformations in perceptions of what a supportive community in prison can achieve were recorded as constructive and affirming. It was "peer support" in "solidarity" (LWLK and LWLW) with one another that made the difference. Moltmann refers to this type of phenomenon as the community of Christ crucified, "that goes beyond socialist options, for it also leads to community in solidarity with people for whom no revolution and no state can ever be made" (Moltmann 1974, p.295).

The experience of Moltmann and the research participants converges as they see their imprisoned experience as one which is both a collective and an individual experience. Participants initially spoke of their faith as a private matter but shared it later with others as a way of coping. Similarly, Moltmann suggested that his faith, although fundamentally bound up with an existentialist situation, was "not just a private matter but also a social situation. Seen from the outside, whatever may seem to be my own particular individuality is from the start always related to collective experiences" (Moltmann 1974, p.166). Moltmann needed hope that was stronger than death which he found in his newly found faith, where God played an ambiguous dual role. He saw hope as an "experience of both God as the power of hope and of God's presence in suffering" (Moltmann 1991, p.293). The rituals which I co-created with prisoners always spoke of the fact that nothing, not even death could separate us from God (Romans 8:38 NRSV). This is another theological model of enfranchisement. What was conveyed in the faith rituals and

by some of the participants in the courses was the capacity of prayer to keep hope alive, just as in Moltmann's view of what happens when people are silenced under humiliation

> [I]t is often only prayer that keeps their hope alive, so that they do not give themselves up. For praying, sighing, complaining and crying out for God are not religious gifts or performances. They are realistic expressions of the abyss into which people have fallen, or have put themselves, and which they discover in their own hearts (Moltmann 1992, p.76).

Finally I sought to enter imaginatively into Doka (2002) and Kauffman's (1989) discourse and identify ways that responding to 'imprisoned grief' could challenge the status quo of prison culture. Prison chaplains act as advocates for compassionate decision making in the face of grief and loss. This was seen as "refreshing" by Liebling et al. (2012 p.37). Questions will remain particularly about how difficult this is to achieve in the prevailing culture of the Prison Service. After the course was finished the facilitators all felt that a shift of mind-set still needed to take place amongst participants and staff to challenge this further.

My thesis has argued that the particular spiritual and practical coping mechanisms developed during the Living with Loss project combated 'imprisoned grief.' 'Imprisoned grief' had its own unique expression which revealed that grieving was often suspended whilst in prison arising from anticipatory grief, bereavement, loss of freedom and from

the crime of homicide. Its 'magnification' was due to its imprisoned status and was often 'being silenced' by those around. Prisoners responded by imprisoning feelings of grief and loss in their mind. For prisoners this led to a feeling of being 'broken' and that there was a 'loss of hope in life itself.' I felt that disenfranchised grief and self-disenfranchised grief were no longer adequate descriptions of what I had unearthed; hence I named 'imprisoned grief' as a new phenomenon.

Different theoretical perspectives have shed light on what the prisoners were experiencing but nowhere was there a theological, spiritual or active practical response. As a result of the research, changes in my own practice took place to give prisoners as much autonomy and independence as possible. My research question of how the Living with Loss project addressed 'imprisoned grief' has both an individual and corporate aspect. Individually, I was able to highlight the significance of the spiritual coping mechanisms and practical solutions that were found to work, most powerfully in the faith rituals. These assisted individuals in a number of different ways and were expanded to mark anniversaries in a prisoner's life. The project drew on the skills of a peer advocate to promote the course amongst prisoners new to HMP Whitemoor. Individuals then felt confident to assert themselves to do the work of enfranchisement, robustly reported in the informal interviews a year after the support group had finished.

Corporately, the project drew on the skills of chaplains from all faiths and a small group of dedicated chaplaincy volunteers. Slowly the culture amongst uniformed officers changed and they commended the project. In the spirit of action research, recommendations to improve the course by current project members were implemented. These included the drawing of a life map at the beginning of the course, plotting the losses and reactions to loss from the past. The course curriculum[9] was lengthened by three weeks to include anticipatory grief and loss by one's own hands. The number of film clips increased as an aid to objectifying personal situations with personal reflection following during the week. Discussing and planning a faith ritual, although optional, happened during session eight. Prisoners could also receive individual pastoral care between course sessions. Prisoners who had graduated from the programme were invited to attend a monthly support group, where there were both group and individual activities laid on, dependent upon need.

I would recommend that the work be done in pairs as part of a contained multi-faith team using chaplaincy volunteers' gifts and skills to enhance the process and hold each prisoner's spiritual needs in mind. There are specific implications for professionals working either in Open or High Secure conditions as needs differ for those beginning long sentences and those reaching the end of their sentence. The way in

[9] See Appendix Three

which attachment is made to the prison in which they are serving time depends upon how far prisoners are held from home and what length of sentence and range of losses they are facing. The substantive findings of the thesis go beyond the academy, my professional life as a chaplain or the personal, to the wider Church. There are implications for others working in similar fields and areas for future research. This thesis is a contribution to a theology of 'imprisoned grief' to the Church in other places where it cares for disenfranchised people. The Living with Loss project offers a template in which others can see the significant contribution that practical theology can make to enfranchising, liberating and transforming those who find themselves trapped by their own circumstances and life events. It is beneficial both for individuals and communities of loss to challenge the status quo of their situation.

Further research questions emerged during the Living with Loss project which could not be pursued. These areas include how unresolved grief and loss experiences may contribute to recidivism rates, 'quality of life' issues for indeterminate life sentence prisoners and how the spiritual needs of those dying in custody should be addressed. These issues touch both on the maintenance of the status quo within the Prison Service, where there is still the overriding debate about the purposes of imprisonment: is it for punishment, rehabilitation and/or public protection? I valued the prisoner narrative as worthy of engaging with this - strengthening their resolve to make wise and autonomous

decisions about how they live in an atmosphere pervasive of loss and encounter loss in the future.

A further recommendation would be to complete a longitudinal study in a cross section of prisons focussing on spiritual needs in coping with the pains of imprisonment. I am conscious of the gaps in my evidence base and that not every category of prison is represented - the female, young offender and juvenile voice is unheard. These are all possibilities for future practice and further research.

Relatively recent scenes of Ronnie Biggs show that questions of humane containment and when to release prisoners with terminal conditions are still hotly debated. "Compassion" (LWL W) was what one research participant said was missing amongst those who made decisions concerning visiting seriously ill and dying relatives and attending funerals. Involving a prisoner in making decisions about their future is a significant way to address issues concerning autonomous responsibility for actions. I would therefore argue for deeper involvement of prisoners in consenting to compassionate release with their family members as a response to my findings. I would like to hope that my elucidation of a narrative of 'imprisoned grief' can assist in restoring this as a truly compassionate process.

There are other unheard voices which reveal the limited scope of my research. The family and friends of those with 'imprisoned grief' have not been the focus of the research but are a vital component. They too

are in the “shadows of the cross” (Moltmann 1997, p.97) but often ignored. There are implications for substantial further research here.

In summary, this research has identified and responded to the phenomenon of ‘imprisoned grief’ via theological reflection, finding spiritual coping mechanisms and practical solutions. As a piece of practical theology it has made an original and distinctive contribution to the academy and professional practice.

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Glossary

F Facilitator

KFG Kirkham focus group

LWL K Living with loss Kirkham

Prisoner K Course participant from HMP Kirkham

LWL W Living with Loss Whitemoor

Prisoner W Course participant from HMP Whitemoor

PreCQK Pre course questionnaire Kirkham

PreCQW Pre course questionnaire Whitemoor

POCQK Post Course questionnaire Kirkham

POCQW Post course questionnaire Whitemoor

LWLWES Living with Loss Whitemoor Evaluation sheets

LWLSG Living with Loss support group

LWLWFUI Living with Loss Whitemoor follow up interview

Appendix One

Pre- course Questionnaire for Living with Loss Course

To be completed by all participants before the start of the course, following acceptance on to the programme

1. Which situations have brought loss in your life? E.g. imprisonment, bereavement, divorce

2. List how you felt following a loss and then how you reacted to the loss? E.g. angry, misuse of alcohol and/or drugs

3. What positive changes did loss bring to your life?

4. Is there anything that makes it difficult for you to talk to other people about loss?

5. Why do people avoid talking about loss?

6. What is difficult about dealing with a loss in prison?

7. How can the anger, we inevitably feel, show itself following a loss?

8. What does 'getting over' a loss mean? E.g. Resolution, acceptance, getting on with life

9. What has helped you move forward after a loss?

Conditions of Living with Loss Course

Respect - for each other and other people's problems

Confidentiality - 'what is shared here stays here' (Only exception is if security and safeguarding over-ride)

Commitment to – Attendance, Non-offensive language, not talking across each other, No violence, No putting down, No negative humour

Please return the completed questionnaire to the Chaplaincy within 7 days

and sign below

I have read the conditions that govern the Living with Loss Course.

I accept that I must respect others and will give this course my full commitment.

Whatever I hear on this course relating to another person I will keep confidential

Signature **Date**

Post Course Questionnaire

To be completed by all participants at the end of the course

Which situations have that have brought loss to your life have you explored on this programme?

Have you been able to reflect on ways in which you coped with loss and think that you will be able to deal differently with things when the next loss comes along?

What is positive about a loss for you?

Did you examine how and what things you find difficult to talk about following a loss? Are you in a different place to do this now?

Will you be more readily able to talk about loss following completion of this course and if so how will you go about this?

What is difficult about dealing with a loss in prison for you?

How will the anger, we inevitably feel, show itself following a loss, now that you have completed the course?

Have you been able to reach a place of resolution for some of you loss (es) and if so how have you done this? Are you able to live in a different way with other losses that you have encountered in your life?

What has helped you move forward after a loss? Did attending the optional session 8 enable you to do this?

Appendix Two

Faculty of Humanities
Consent Form for Participants Taking Part in Student Research Projects

Title of Project: BEREAVEMENT IN PRISON

Name of Researcher BLOCK LETTERS: REV D RUSSELL LANE
School: HUMANITIES

Participant (volunteer)

Please read this and if you are happy to proceed, sign below.

The researcher has given me my own copy of the information sheet which I have read and understood. The information sheet explains the nature of the research and what I would be asked to do as a participant. I understand that the research is for a student project and that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded unless subject to any legal requirements. S/he has discussed the contents of the information sheet with me and given me the opportunity to ask questions about it.

I agree to take part as a participant in this research and I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, and without detriment to myself.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Family Name BLOCK LETTERS:.....

Other Name(s) BLOCK LETTERS:.....

If the participant is under 18 or a vulnerable adult a parent/guardian or other responsible adult must also sign the form:

Signed:.....
Family Name BLOCK LETTERS.....
Other Name(s) BLOCK LETTERS.....
Relationship to Participant BLOCK LETTERS.....
Date:.....

Researcher

I, the researcher, confirm that I have discussed with the participant the contents of the information sheet.

Signed:.....
Date:.....

HM Prison

Whitemoor

Longhill Road

March

Cambridgeshire

PE15 0PR

Telephone 01354 602726

Fax No. 01354 650783

Information Sheet

Living With Loss Course Evaluation

Study Title

What role does belonging to a faith community play in supporting disenfranchised grieving prisoners?

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the current Chaplaincy provision for supporting prisoners at HMP Whitemoor who live with loss. As you are aware once you have completed the Living with Loss course you are invited to join the support group which meets on a monthly basis in the Chaplaincy. This group has been exploring new ways in which we as Chaplains and you as prisoners can assist you in more specific ways to cope with the disenfranchisement that you feel when you first arrive in High Security, when you suffer a bereavement and how you develop strategies to cope with the loss of your victim. This work will now be written up as a research project and the findings checked with you for verification and accuracy. This

will then enable the Chaplaincy team to put in place further resources that you identify to help support you and others.

This research will be submitted to the University of Chester as part of a Professional Doctorate in Practical Theology.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen as you have completed the Living with Loss Course at HMP Whitemoor.

Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect the standard of support you currently receive form the Chaplaincy Department.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you take part, you will receive a copy of the notes taken at the Living with Loss support group. You will also be sent a copy of the detailed results from the questionnaires that will be circulated as part of the evaluation. This will allow you to add anything further that you think of when you are reading the report. The data that we use to write the evaluation will be anonymised so that nobody will know what you said specifically.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes, no body except the researcher will see the notes of the interview and immediately they are written up they will be made anonymous. Some of what you say may be used as part of the writing up, for instance there may be a comment which is written up, but it will not be said that this belongs to you. All the comments will be anonymous in the report.

As a researcher, there are circumstances when I will have a duty to disclose certain information to the Prison Service. This includes:

Behaviour that is against prison rules and can be adjudicated against (please see Section51 of the Prison rules 1999)

Undisclosed illegal acts

Behaviour that is harmful to the research participant (e.g. Intention to self-harm or complete suicide)

The data collected will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the prison and destroyed in 2013 when the research ceases. Thus only the researcher and her academic supervisor at the University of Chester will have access to the research data. There will be no financial benefits or losses accrued by you as a research participant.

You will have access to any Chaplaincy team member should you need it during the length of the research.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

A copy of my research will be kept at the University of Chester and at the Prison Service Library. It maybe that an article is published about it.

Who is organising and funding the research?

Revd Rosalind Lane, Anglican Chaplain at HMP Whitemoor is conducting the research and the Prison Service and two Christian charitable bodies are funding it.

Contact for further information

If you would like to learn more about the study please contact Revd Rosalind Lane in the Chaplaincy Department by the application process.

If you are willing to take part in the study please fill out the consent form attached and return it to Revd Rosalind Lane Chaplaincy Department in the envelope provided.

Thank you very much for considering this.

Appendix Three

A Weekly Course

Run by the Chaplaincy Team

LIVING

WITH

LOSS

The Course Examines the

Feelings and Reactions to Loss

and the Possibility of Letting Go.

HMP Whitemoor

Name …… Wing……..

Content of Sessions

In general the sessions will include the following:

- A recap and any observations on the previous session.
- Input from the leaders.
- Discussion.
- Coffee and Tea / Comfort Break (10 mins).
- Wind down time to talk / pick up ideas with an individual facilitator and reflect on which issues particularly affect you, and to prepare for the next week.

Week 1

Making a Start

Welcome and Introductions

This is a weekly course run by the Chaplaincy which is intended to help people make better sense of losses that they have experienced in life.

There is:-

No 'Hot' Seat

No one is made to say anything
No pushing religion.

While we ask for a commitment to attend all the sessions we recognise that for some the feelings could be so painful that they may not be able to complete the course.

Nevertheless we believe that it is worth trying.

Ground Rules – to be negotiated by the group.

We remind you that the Chaplaincy believes in confidentiality. We will not reveal the things you say to us unless we have your permission or unless there are security issues that affect your own or someone else's personal safety.

Every member of the group will be expected to abide by the ground rules agreed during the first session.

Creating a life map exercise

Why am I here?

1. What made you join the course?

a. I was threatened by the Chaplain.

b. I feel a need to sort out issues from the past.

c. I was encouraged by Officers, Psychology, CARAT workers etc.

d. I believe that it will guarantee parole.

e. …….

2. What do you hope for?

f. An easy afternoon off the Wing

g. Coffee and biscuits.

h. Making the pain of the past less.

i. Another certificate to hang on the wall.

j. A cure to all that is wrong with me.

k. ……

3. What painful times have you experienced?

l. I once stubbed my toe on the corner of the bed.

m. Toothache

n. The death of someone close.

o. The end of a close relationship.

p. Badly treated when I was younger.

q. ……

4. Do memories still come back?

a. Every day.

b. As nightmares.

c. When other bad things happen.

d. When I become angry.

e. Sometimes.

5. What effect have painful times had on you?

a. None.

b. I have become an angrier person.

c. I turned to drink / drugs.

d. I understand other people's pain better.

e. I feel I can't cope with any more pain.

f. It has made me think again about what really matters in life.

6. Who have you talked to?

a. A stranger on the bus.

b. A counsellor.

c. A friend.

d. A member of my family.

e. No-one.

f. My life is my business and no-one else's.

g……..

7. **Why aren't you over it yet?**

a. I haven't had enough time.

b. I haven't had enough help.

c. I will never get over it.

d. I don't want to get over it.

e. I don't know how to begin.

f. ……..

Film Goodbye Bafana- snippets

What do we mean by loss?

Illustrations of loss due to imprisonment, bereavement, criminal behaviour.

Brief look at loss of freedom and emotions associated with this.

Discussion

What losses do you face whilst in prison?

Can we opt out of losses?

Ready for next week

You might like to think about some situations that you are facing whilst in prison.

What did you lose?

Who did you lose?

Week 2

Life Limiting Choices and Imprisonment

Review the last session and anything arising from it.

Difficulties when facing a Loss in Prison

Trapped?

Powerless?

Who can you talk to / trust?

Isolation

Institutionalisation

Film Goodbye Bafana snippets

Relationships whilst in Prison

Illness and Bereavement whilst in prison

Parenting whilst in Prison

Positives and Negatives

Life License

What does this mean in reality? Now and in the future

Choices to be made

Film Man Dancing snippets

Discussion

Who are my supporters?

Who are my guides/ sages /lifelines/angels/containers?

Ready for next week

How do people hide what they really feel?

How have people expected us to behave after a loss?

What do you want from the course?

Wind down time

Coffee/ Tea

Week 3

The Bridge

Review the last session and anything arising from it.

Am I ready to face loss due to bereavement in my life?

Can I face the losses that I have caused to my victim and my victim's family?

Discussion time

Positives and Negatives of doing this whilst in prison?

Feelings and emotions associated with loss of a family member and the victim.

Film Shadowlands snippets

Discussion

How do we prepare for bereavement whilst in prison?

What feelings are associated with this?

Wind down time

Tea/coffee

Ready for next week

How do people hide what they really feel?

How have people expected us to behave after a loss?

Week 4

Facing the Reality of Loss

Review the last session and anything arising from it.

Video: The Royle Family

The video is a caricature of behaviour.

We sometimes get caught up in other people's losses.

How often do we hide our real feelings?

Feelings - told we ought to

- What we actually feel

- Guilt associated with the Mismatch.

Death the Big Taboo

List the Feelings and Reactions following a Loss.

Are you surprised at the contradictions?

What is normal?

Are there any particular areas that we all must go through and maybe more than once?

Wind down time

Tea/ coffee

Ready for next week.

Feelings I have seen in myself:

Reactions I have seen in myself:

Week 5

Feelings and Reactions

Associated with Loss

Review the last session and anything arising.

List the Feelings and Reactions following a Loss.

Are you surprised at the contradictions?

What is normal?

Are there any particular areas that we all must go through and maybe more than once?

Video: 'Mrs Brown'

This is an example of a grief that has got 'stuck'.

It is 3 years after the death of Price Albert. Queen Victoria is at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. With her household in seclusion.

What to look for:

What is happening?

Who thinks they are helping, but are not? And why?

Who is helping?

Other things this teaches us about grief.

Discussion on Video

What, if anything, in the video applies to your own situation?

Discussion with facilitator about applying knowledge to own situation, during the following week.

Wind Down Time.

Tea/ coffee

Ready for next week.

Look at the areas where your grief is stuck and try to think why?

Week 6

Consequences

Review the last session and anything arising.

What can happen if we don't deal with our feelings at the time?

Discussion to consider the issues and feelings surrounding

a) Anger

Look at the previous list of feelings and pick out the anger words.

Why is anger such a big part of loss?

At whom or at what is the anger directed?

b) Blame

Do we need someone to blame?

What happens if there is no-one to blame?

How the self-blame becomes destructive.

Who finds a way out?

Discussion

Video: 'The Mission' Pt 1

Leaders will set the scene and explain who the main characters are.

Look out for;

Who is angry?

How do they look for someone to blame?

How the self-blame becomes destructive?

Discussion on the video.

Wind Down Time.

Ready for next week

Think about where you have laid the blame for a loss.

Have you ever blamed yourself or someone else unjustly?

Week 7

Letting Go

Review the last session and anything arising.

What might Captain Mendoza have done?

Video: 'The Mission' Pt 2

Leaders remind and set the scene.

Discussion

When is it right to 'let go'?

What happens if we don't?

What if the other person is not sorry?

Or we can't tell them how wronged we feel?

Is there anything of which we cannot or

Should not let go?

How would life be different if we let go?

How will we know when we have 'let go'?

In what ways do we punish ourselves by not letting go?

Discussion

Trauma of loss at our hands- defences, coming to terms with our actions, implications for the future

Implications for victim and perpetrator

Managing the triggers, flashbacks, support from others

Reviewing the lip map exercise

Tea / coffee

Wind Down Time.

Ready for next week

What do I need to let go of?

What can't I let go of?

When will it be right to move on?

What will I do next to help myself move on?

Week 8

Holding On and Goodbyes

Review the last session and anything arising

What helps or has helped?

Funerals / Divorce parties

Writing a letter and then burning it.

Writing a poem / painting a picture

Visiting a grave when you are released

Lighting a candle

Keeping a memories box, photos, a favourite object

Talking the story through again with someone (and again and again).

Ask yourself

'How can I continue to work on this?'

Optional planning of a faith ritual around bereavement, loss of victim, loss due to imprisonment with your faith minister.

How do we feel now that the course is ending?
Finishing?

Joining the monthly Living with Loss support group (Second Thursday each month at 2pm in the Chaplaincy- films, discussion support, refreshments)

How was it for you?

What worked and what didn't?

Evaluation sheets for those who are not attending optional session 9

Certificates

Reminder of confidentiality

and trust in each other.

Tea / coffee

Wind Down Time.

Week 9

Optional Faith Rituals

Review the last session and anything arising

Matters to Consider in planning

Questions to ask you?

What faith has supported me so far in my life?

What and who do I need to lay to rest?

How will I feel a sense of resolution through this activity?

What is helpful?

What would I find my helpful at this time e.g. lighting a candle, silence to reflect, scripture reading, talking with the facilitator, explaining matters to my family, writing a letter to the deceased, sending flowers on the anniversary of death, other practical/cultural/religious/spiritual considerations

Considering the following questions

How would I handle matters differently now?

Am I forgiven for my actions?

How do I live positively with the losses I face?

Completion of Evaluation Sheets

Tea / coffee

Wind Down Time.